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ABSTRACT

Illustrating that the Bread Loaf Grants Program is cost-effective and beneficial, this collection presents reports and articles by and about teachers and students involved in staff and curriculum development projects funded by the program. The collection concludes that the projects demonstrate that literacy flourishes in settings where children and young people have reasons to talk and write, and where teachers have the time and incentive to plan, think, and talk about language and learning. The first part of the collection presents 27 comments and reflections prepared by teachers and project directors: "Writing to Learn in the Elementary School" (N. Atwell); "A Teacher's Evolution: A Case Study from the South Carolina Rural Writing Network" (I. Coleman); "Coming of Age: The Cross-Age Tutoring Project" (E. Stuckey); "Cross Age Tutoring in Branchville" (M. Able); "The Cross-Age Tutoring Project" (D. Durante); "Cross-Age Tutoring for Special Learners" (S. Harrison); The 'Gems' Project" (L. DeBlois); "The Drama/Writing Project" (B. Durbin); "Some Benefits of Networking: A Letter to BreadNet" (J. Forsyth); "Networking from Students' Perspective"; "Bread Loaf-in-the-Schools Bethel Project" (W. Graham and M. Graham); "BreadNet: The Native American Network" (G. Griffith); "Writing Program for Sophomore English" (A. Harmon); "Breadnet: The Missing Link for Writers" (K. Holvig); "Discovering the Community" (D. Latham); "The Russian Adventure" (L. Lewis); "From Writing to Scripting" (N. Linvill); "Publication Workshop" (F. Lyons and others); "Staging Change" (C. Myers); "Secondary Language Arts and Art" (D. O'Dell); "Tunermiut Qanemciit Qulirait-llu: Achieving a Sense of Self and Community through Shared Narrative" (B. Orr); "Exploring Home" (V. Scarbrough); "What It Meant to Shrink the World" (J. Schwartz); "Networking: A New Ground in Kentucky Schools" (C. Stumbo); "BreadNet: Going Out to Come Back" (R. Williams); "Developing BreadNet for the Schools" (L. Wollin); and "Going beyond the Basal" (A. Young). The second part of the collection presents articles and features about projects published in Bread Loaf News and elsewhere. The articles in the second part of the collection are divided into sections: Assessment; BreadNet; Cross-Age Tutoring; Hume-Fogg Academic High School; The South Carolina Rural Writing Network; and Carol Stumbo. (RS)

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The Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program

Sponsored by the Bread Loaf School Of English,
Middlebury College

and

The Clemson University Department of English

Funded by Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity

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Preface

by Ike Coleman

I find the following reports from projects sponsored by the Bread Loaf School of English and funded by Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity stunning in their variety. Because of such variety, writing a *brief* report on the projects would be nearly pointless--even an almost three-hundred page document hardly touches the raw reality of the work of five years by scores of teachers and thousands of students all over the United States, and in a number of foreign countries. From the four pieces on cross-age tutoring containing some of the richest letters by students in some of the poorest places in rural South Carolina, to the journals about a trip to Russia by Vermont students and their teacher, the wealth here defies summary. But here's a sampling: Jeffrey Schwartz writes about telecommunications' ability to bring the world closer for his students--the way computer and modem showed his affluent, eastern prep school students how much they were like people everywhere, in small western cow towns, or on Indian reservations; Ben Orr's students in Tununak, Alaska, capture the stories of their elders--in Yup'ik their native language, as well as English; Deane O' Dell's students, also in Alaska, explore the relationships between writing and art; Cindy Myers tells the story--very modestly--of how she quietly and gracefully transformed the writing curriculum in her district; Will and Marguerite Graham tell a different version of the same story; Nancy Linvill, a teacher of students labeled learning disabled, describes how she moved from a curriculum based on isolated skills to one where students and teacher worked together to communicate, to each other and to outsiders--supported by outside grants totalling more than $100,000.

Most of all, perhaps, I'm struck by how different these pieces are from what we might expect from reports of grant expenditures. Unlike many such reports, these could not have been written at the beginning of the grant; they don't recount, detail by detail, how the recipients did what they said they were going to do. Obviously, these recipients did far more than they, or anyone else, could have imagined they could do. Pervading these pieces is the joy and breathtaking surprise of *learning*--not just by the students, but by the teachers as well; another reason these pieces could not have been written at the beginning of the grant is that the teachers are very different people now than they were five years ago. Their changes have been fueled by the freedom to grow and take risks provided by their very modest grants.

Following the reports proper are some of the articles that have been written about the major projects (South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring, the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, and BreadNet, among others) in a number of publications, including *Bread Loaf News, Education Week,* and the *Harvard Educational Review,* as well as such books as *The Right To Literacy,* published by MLA, and *Students Teaching, Teachers Learning,* to be published soon by Heinemann/Boynton-Cook. I think the articles should serve both as compelling reading for teachers and students and persuasive evidence of success for administrators, school boards, parents and others.

Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program
The Bread Loaf School of English
James Maddox, Director
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont

Since 1986, Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity has funded the Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program, which has in turn supported *Bread Loaf News*, BreadNet, Nancie Atwell's program for writing and learning, the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, directed by Ike Coleman, and the Cross-Age Tutoring Project directed by Elspeth Stuckey. About thirty Bread Loaf teachers have received grants for school and community projects, many of which have been described in *Bread Loaf News*.

This booklet has two sections:

- Part One is a collection of comments and reflections prepared by teachers and project directors.
- Part Two is a collection of articles and features about Bingham-funded projects published in Bread Loaf News and elsewhere.

The Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program demonstrates the cost-effectiveness and other benefits that occur when teachers (and, in some cases, students) manage staff and curriculum development projects, including budgets. The program also demonstrates the difficulty of even the most successful projects' survival in some systems. Finally, the Bread Loaf projects show us that literacy flourishes in settings where children and young people have reasons to talk and write, have readers they care about and opportunities for publishing; where teachers have time and some incentive to plan, think, and talk about language and learning.

The importance of gifts by private foundations and individuals increases as budgets for public schools diminish and pressures intensify. The generosity and vision of the trustees of Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity have affected what we know about writing programs, change and resources, and we are deeply grateful for their support. We are also grateful to the administration of Middlebury College for encouraging and supporting collaborative work that has involved many institutions and individuals, with Middlebury and Bread Loaf at the center.

Dixie Goswami
Director, Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program
June, 1991

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Part Two

Assessment

BreadNet

Cross-Age Tutoring

Hume-Fogg Academic High School

The South Carolina Rural Writing Network

Carol Stumbo

Part One

Writing to Learn in the Elementary School

by Nancie Atwell
The Center for Teaching and Learning
Edgecomb, Maine

There's such a lag in time between the completion of a manuscript as a book or journal article that I sometimes find it hard to relate to my own finished products. Parts of *In the Middle* were almost three years old when it was published in 1987, by which time my thinking and teaching were three years older too. The book felt like an artifact the first time I paged through it.

There's an even longer lag between finishing a book and finding out others' reactions to it. It's at least a year before reviews begin to appear in the professional journals, and long after the first edition, readers will continue to discover the book and write in response. Every week I receive letters from new readers of *In the Middle* about burning issues that I laid to rest--or changed my mind about--years ago. Life goes on, except in books.

Coming to Know: Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades, the book about our Bingham/Bread Loaf Project, exists in a similar time warp. The project ended in June of 1988, we wrote it that summer and fall, and the book appeared a year later; however, the responses from readers have just started to arrive. Quite a few of these bear university letterheads. Graduate students who are casting about for dissertation topics and professors lining up their sabbaticals would like to come up to Maine to observe the Writing to Learn Project. Although the energy of the project lives on in the chapters of *Coming to Know*, there has not been a Writing to Learn Project for three years. There are no "project schools" to visit. And this is just as we planned it.

Writing to Learn was a curriculum development project that involved three Maine schools: Kingfield Elementary, Boothbay Region Elementary School, and Howard C. Reiche School in Portland. I worked with twenty-three teachers who wished to explore the uses of writing across the curriculum in the upper elementary grades, training them in writing process approaches and then collaborating with them to discover how such approaches might become tools for learning about history, science, literature and mathematics. The second year of the project involved a core group of teachers from Boothbay and Reiche who were ready to analyze and describe particular aspects of their work. They developed research topics and spent the 1987-88 school year gathering data in their classrooms. Then they wrote drafts of their research reports, consulted with me and each other, revised and revised, and compiled the book manuscript that we submitted to Heinemann that winter.

By the time the teachers began to write about their classrooms in the summer of 1988, three of them had taken new jobs in new schools. Other participants in the project followed suit the next year and the year after, so that the "project schools" currently employ only half of the contributors to *Coming to Know*.

Our goal was never to institutionalize Writing to Learn at the Project sites. Anyone who has worked in the public schools for any length of time understands that *schools* per se don't develop and sustain effective programs; individual teachers do. When individual teachers left Boothbay and Reiche, they took their expertise, commitment and professional curiosity with them. Although no longer project teachers in project schools, they and their students continue to use writing to learn about their worlds. I venture that they always will. The former Writing to Learn teachers also lead study groups, conduct and attend workshops and seminars, and speak at conferences; I hope that they will continue to write for publication. Every year, no matter where they teach, their own students benefit. And because of *Coming to Know* and their increased professional activity, thousands of teachers from across the United States and Canada, and tens of thousands of their students benefit as well.

The Writing to Learn Project could not have happened without Bingham and Bread Loaf. It involved too many hours of my time and that of the teachers, too many books and resources, too many miles commuting between schools on Maine's back roads for the individual school systems to have been able to afford the project's final cost of $93,675.

More significantly, our goals were too far-reaching for the schools to pursue on their own. We sought to do nothing less that invent a series of models for young children's academic writing: to investigate the uses of learning logs, develop alternatives to conventional report writing, explore connections between writing and reading, and create new approaches to planning, curriculum development, and the allocation and uses of resources. We avoided expensive commercial programs in favor of carefully selected trade books, hands-on materials, and supplies for writing and publishing children's writing. We tried to act with a pedagogical rigor that would allow other teachers to understand our theories and methods and appreciate why and how we were teaching and students were learning. In writing about our work we heeded Heinemann's advice and avoided making the book too self-referential and "projecty." Instead of writing as participants in a project, the teachers tried to take readers inside their own classrooms and their own thinking. This work challenged old assumptions about writing and invited other teachers to attempt new classroom organizations, new perspectives on children's roles as active learners and writers, and new ways of sponsoring and responding to student writing. The Writing to Learn teachers became *engaged with their own questions*. Only from this basis could they in turn encourage others.

What sense do I make of all this? First, the more we expect of people of all ages, the more we will get. The children in these classrooms wrote so much, so well, with such piercing insight, that I can never again teach without asking students to reflect on what they are doing and thinking by writing about it. At The Center for Teaching and Learning, the new elementary school that Susan Stires and I recently started with Donna Maxim, one of the Writing to Learn teachers, we expect the children to write every day and in every subject, and the pay-off has been enormous. The students write as authors *and* as historians, scientists, mathematicians, critics, thinkers.

Similarly, the more we expect of teachers, the more we will get. They are the hardest-working people I know, but too often their long hours are squandered in committee meetings, trivial in-service programs, and, especially, commercial materials that insult their intelligence and their students' and require endless testing and correcting. If we want to improve writing instruction and help teachers change, we must structure in-service and summer projects so that teachers can engage in authentic activities and take major responsibility for what they will do. This means hard work, but it's the kind of work that makes teaching worthwhile, keeps people in the profession, and gives them courage to seek out jobs in districts that will support and encourage their work when a school board or adminstration makes good teaching impossible.

Teacher-researchers do need networks of colleagues who will help them make sense of data, push their thinking, and share solutions to common teaching problems. And they need permission to move on to new areas of inquiry without a project or a Nancie Atwell setting their direction for them. Writing to Learn was designed to become obsolete so that these good teachers could evolve and come into their own.

"To Be of Use," a poem by Marge Piercy, served as a kind of epigraph to the Writing to Learn Project. It ends, "The pitcher cries for water to carry, and a person for work that is real." The teachers who participated in Writing to Learn are determined to make their work in classrooms mean something, to make it memorable and useful for their kids, to make it real.

A Teacher's Evolution:
A Case Study from the South Carolina Rural Writing Network

by Ike Coleman
Clemson, South Carolina

The South Carolina Rural Writing Network (SCRWN) began five years ago as a small project sponsored by the Bread Loaf School of English and the Clemson University Department of English. The project's purpose was simply to promote writing for genuine communication in a few selected South Carolina public schools. In addition to support, the SCRWN provided grants of up to several thousand dollars for writing projects designed by teachers and students. What follows is the story of one teacher in the network.

At the start of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, Nancy Linvill at Edwards Junior High School had taught for several years in elementary, and at Edwards, special education, but she had had little experience with the teaching of writing. She had fallen into the South Carolina Rural Writing Network almost by default (she was the first teacher in the school to show interest in the Network), and though she was glad to be part of the project, she felt intimidated in comparison to the other teachers in the SCRWN, many of whom had a great deal of experience as writers and teachers of writing.

But Nancy was not, by the standards of teacher education in this country, an under-prepared teacher. Before joining the project, she had taken a number of graduate courses in education at four highly-respected universities, and she had received her Master's degree in education from a fifth. In addition, she had been honored with the receipt of a grant for five thousand dollars from the South Carolina Department of Education to design, with the help of a computer programmer, a spelling program for her students. That it is possible for a teacher like Nancy to both obtain what ought to be excellent preparation for teaching, and yet not be given experience in the teaching of writing, indicates the depths of the problems in promoting writing in public schools.

This reality, that many teachers who are responsible for the teaching of writing have no experience in either writing or the teaching of writing must be faced by projects like the South Carolina Rural Writing Network. One question that arises is whom such a project should choose as member teachers: experienced and committed teachers of writing who will be the most likely to make such a project a success (a small minority of teachers, or even of English teachers), or teachers who, like Nancy, have little experience in the teaching of writing, but who probably won't get any except through such a project or some other outside source.

Nancy's example as a member of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network provides a good answer. She insists that such projects should choose not only the most accomplished teachers, but also those who are caring and dedicated but who have much to learn. Her success in the Network and beyond bears her answer out.

When she joined the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, Nancy Linvill spent little time on the teaching of writing. In place of writing and reading, Nancy taught a great deal of traditional grammar to her "resource" students--students assumed to have learning disabilities--in the form of isolated skills outside any communicative context. At most, her students wrote infrequent one-paragraph essays on topics of her choosing. Nancy marked the mechanical mistakes in red, and then handed the papers back to the students. Many of the students could hardly write when they came to her class, and she rarely, if ever, saw appreciable progress during the time she taught them--often three years, from seventh to ninth grades.

In a recent interview, Nancy said that during the first year of the Network, the ambitious projects of other teachers and students in the SCRWN awed her. She confessed as well that she didn't do much that was visible with the grant the fist year (admittedly, the grant was small; other schools received four or five thousand dollars, while Edwards received only one thousand). Instead, she spent the year looking, listening, and absorbing the philosophy of the project by going to the SCRWN conferences, talking to other teachers, and watching the members of the project and volunteers who visited her class to model the teaching of writing. She said the luxury of this time to learn was as crucial to her later success as any aspect of the project.

Beginning in the second year, Nancy's students began writing regularly. The process for her and her students was not painless. Many of her students, immersed in skill and drill since the primary grades, had done little reading and writing in school, and their level of achievement showed it. One student wrote the following story at the beginning of her first year in Nancy's class:

> One day me and my mother was in the mall and my mice got lost. I went to look for her. I found her in the toy depart ment then I had to find my mother it was hard but I did.

This piece shows one reason why so many secondary teachers don't give their low track students many chances to write. With a secondary student at this level of proficiency, even trying to teach writing may seem too threatening or too arduous for a teacher. And this student's writing proficiency was at least average for the students who enter her class; many are far less accomplished.

Nevertheless, following the philosophy of the project, and all good teaching, she began to play the believing game--assuming her students could learn, and acting on that assumption. She and her students listed topics they were interested in learning about and then looked for people in the community and nearby Clemson University who would be willing to talk to the students about those topics. Visitors to her class included a race car driver, a herpetologist, a man who traveled around the world, and a cheerleader. The students taped the interviews, took notes on the tapes, and then, with the help of other visitors to the class, including Leslie Owens, then Pickens County language arts coordinator, and Mark Charney, an English professor at Clemson, the students organized their notes into polished pieces of writing. In addition, they typed their pieces into the three computers in the classroom. After extensive revision, many of the pieces were sent by electronic and paper mail to the students of other teachers participating in the project. Those students then responded with letters and pieces of their own writing.

As a natural outgrowth of the project, Nancy's classroom was being transformed, not only just in the content of her teaching, but in its very foundation as well. Before all students had practiced the same skills at the same time, now students began to work more independently. One student might, for instance, be writing a personal narrative, while another would be working on an essay about one of the visitors. And though several of her students might be writing pieces about the race car driver, they would be progressing at different speeds. Nancy's job became to help them when they needed it, not to *teach* them, per se.

A constant lesson from Nancy's work has been that change is not necessarily easy. As her teaching style changed, new problems arose. Many students expected their teacher to teach, not to be a helper and guide. "You're the teacher. You're supposed to learn us!" one student told her when she asked him what he'd like to learn about next. Even more serious were discipline problems. At Edwards, tight discipline is demanded. Though the administration was supportive of Nancy's work, her classes could conceivably have gotten her into trouble during the transition in her style of teaching. Students who had spent the majority of their time in more traditional classes sometimes took advantage of the structure of Nancy's class, where they were allowed, for instance, to walk across the room to confer with another student about their writing. The school administration had always admired Nancy's work. Obviously, she didn't want to sacrifice the rewards stemming from that admiration.

But gradually, in that second year of the SCRWN, her students came to accept both the style of the classroom and themselves as learners. Certainly some of her students had serious learning disabilities, or even limited ability. But all of them progressed, and some made astounding progress.

Below is an excerpt of a piece by the same student who wrote the story above, a few months later. Many before and after samples from Nancy's students actually show a great deal more progress, but in many of the later pieces, the students received help from other students or outside volunteers. Though real writers outside of school learn to get help just as her students do, showing such before and after samples wouldn't be fair. The piece below was written under essentially the same conditions as the sample above.

MY FAVORITE CLASS IS ART! ! !

> My favorite class is art. My teacher's name is Mrs. West. She is nice. She helps you if you need it. You have two of your classmates that can help you with your drawings.
>
> We draw lots of slides. Our first slide was of oranges. My second was a butterfly. My slide drawings were ok not very good. I love

> drawing slides of houses. her slides look harder than they really are. I noticed when I draw my first slide. We had to draw a trick off a slide to.
>
> Now I am doing a blockprint. A blockprint is when you take a letter and make it all kind of sizes.
>
> My sister loves to draw to. I hope to continue art through college.

The mechanical problems in this piece would be corrected before publication, the writing would be smoothed out some, especially where a reader couldn't understand, and the writer would learn from the process. In addition, the first sample was of course written by hand. The second piece is not only fuller and longer, but perhaps more importantly, optimistic about education--a characteristic rare in Nancy's students when they enter her class. In addition, by the writing of the second piece, the student has learned word processing, a significant skill in itself.

In addition to sending their pieces electronically and by paper mail to other students in the project, Nancy's students collected samples of their writing to be published in books, each of them produced at the end of the year. Further, any of the numerous visitors to the classroom saw a score of student-written pieces posted on the wall, along with photographs of the students in the process of writing.

As her students benefited, so did Nancy's professional development. Teachers in the Network traded ideas and knowledge at conferences and meetings. Nancy learned, for instance, of Nancie Atwell's book, *In the Middle*, and read it. From the book she adopted a number of practices, including the idea to keep copies of all student work, and to survey and interview students at frequent intervals about their progress.

Nancy's success in the Network owes a great deal to her persistence. She thinks carefully before making any changes in her teaching, but once those changes are made, if she and her students find them beneficial, she holds on to them. Keeping samples of student writing is a good example. In a recent interview with her, she said she not only continues to keep writing samples, but now, with the computers, saves the writing in several places. The students have a file on the computers of all their writing. They keep a hard copy, one copy is published, and one goes in Nancy's files, which the students have access to.

The most important result of keeping writing samples, she says, is that it has shown her, and continues to show much progress the students are making. She admits that she never really knew how capable of learning the students are until she began watching their growth through writing samples. "Before the Bread Loaf Project, I didn't know how much progress the students could make in writing," she said. "I now believe in them." But that's only one example; gradually, over the last five years, she has revolutionized many facets of her teaching.

Nancy's changes as a teacher are perhaps best exemplified by a current project. She applied for and received one of a handful of grants from the South

Carolina Target 2000 program. Hers, for $90,000, paid for a room full of Macintosh computers to support a project using HyperCard software. The students choose research topics that are to be taught by other teachers in school, and then present those topics in classes using a variety of media including writing, sound, and graphics.

At the time of the writing the grant proposal, Nancy had never seen HyperCard software at work, nor had she ever used a Macintosh. But with help from local resources, in this case a professor in the education department at Clemson University, she and her students learned to use the equipment. (Nancy has become adept at finding people and other resources to help her students--a tactic that can go a long way toward alleviating the isolation of teachers and students.)

By the beginning of the HyperCard project, Nancy had become well-accustomed to allowing her students to choose topics, find information on those topics, and then produce something--a published book, or an e-mail message, for example--to be shared with others. The HyperCard project, however, raised the ante. She and her students would be dealing with technology that she had never used, and the students would be researching topics for other classes that she knew nothing about.

Amazingly, after years of transforming her classroom, Nancy had little difficulty adjusting to the position of rarely being the expert in the class. One student, in fact, said in a presentation that he liked knowing things that his teacher didn't. Nancy was not threatened; she was pleased. She did not find herself bothered in the least when she needed help with the computers and the software from the students and others. And she has enjoyed learning about volcanoes, electrical circuits, *Romeo and Juliet*, Guatemala, and plasma from her students working on presentations for other classes. While she learns, her students have been given a position of authority in the classroom.

Since joining the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, Nancy and her students have gone beyond the classroom in a number of ways. Most obviously her students have shared writing and corresponded with other students, and that practice has made more than a superficial difference. For the past three years, Nancy's students have exchanged writing with Diane Towles's students at Easley Junior High, and the tie with Nancy has helped Diane transform her own classroom as well. Reading and writing have now become the center of the work of Diane's students as well.

Furthermore, Nancy and her students have made several presentations to a variety of audiences about their work. She spoke earlier this year to the Orton Society, a group of educators concerned with dyslexia. In addition, she and her students have twice spoken to graduate education classes at Clemson University--surely the first time many of her students have had public speaking experience, inside or outside of school. Finally, she and the students made a presentation to the Upper State Computer Conference about their HyperCard project.

Nancy's work has also affected other teachers in the school. Her colleague Marilyn Raines, excited at what Nancy and her students were doing, joined the

the project and has since received an NCTE Center of Excellence Award for work she developed in the South Carolina Rural Writing Network. And two of her fellow teachers in the school have joined the Rockefeller sponsored REACH project now awarding a yearly grant of several thousand dollars to Edwards.

Nancy, who never before considered herself a writer, has now written an article for publication, though the piece has not yet been published. In addition, she has had an effect statewide. Through her lobbying, her students were the first in South Carolina to be allowed to take the state assessment exam in writing on the computers they had spent the year writing on. Now, any special education students in the state can take the test on computers. But the story has a bittersweet ending: The state department of education lost the students' tests and refused to retest them, though after lobbying they agreed to score the four out of six papers Nancy found on disk files. Two out of the four passed, and Nancy insists that the two she didn't find were as good or better than the two that passed. A passing rate of sixty-six percent for her students, assuming the other two would have passed, would be astonishing; no more than one of her students had passed before.

Nancy says the South Carolina Rural Writing Network has been crucial to her success. "The Bread Loaf project gave me permission to try new things," she says. She believes the money was less important than the credibility the project lent her work. She feels, for instance, that having two institutions like Clemson University and the Bread Loaf School of English behind her made the changes in her teaching possible, by alleviating doubts from the community members and others in the school about her innovative methods.

But she thinks the most important aspect of the project was the support, from the project director, the other teachers, and the faculty from Clemson University who were willing to visit. "Having someone you could call on when you needed help made a world of difference," she says. "Without the Bread Loaf project, I might have changed some, but I would never have made as many changes as I have."

Cross-Age Tutoring: Four Articles

Coming of Age: The Cross-Age Tutoring Project

By Elspeth Stuckey
Director of South Carolina Cross-age Tutoring
Columbia, South Carolina

The letter came in two versions. The first was a computer printout whose sentences columned down the page. This version ended with a request:

> MS. STUCKEY, IF IT'S NOT TO MUCH TO ASK OR YOU I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO SEND ME SOME PENCILS, PAPER AND CRAYON, AND MARKERS. I NEED A LOT NOT A LITTLE BECAUSE THEY USE PAPER SO FAST UNTIL IT'S A SHAME.

The second version of the letter was in pencil. It was written on two pages of lined paper and filled up all the writing space. The letter also ended with a request:

> Mrs. Stuckey is there anyway that you could get me a computer of my own? I could write on like yours. that doesn't cost you a whole arm and an leg. if you can't, that's okay, but i will be upset if you tell me (no!) because I would like to go home and sit down and write all your letters on my very own computer and that would help me learn and do... Ms. Stuckey if you get me one out of your money or whatever I will give you my allowance every month to pay you back for the big favor. Please, please do me that favor. Love always.

Both versions were signed "Johnessia."

If ever there was an example of the angst of literacy, this letter was it. There were two versions of the letter because because the writer was caught between two writing systems. For three days beginning on 29 of October 1987, the writer wrote out the penciled version. For the next two days, she proceeded to input the letter on a computer at her elementary school in Branchville, South Carolina. She had never experienced a keyboard before. She used one finger to locate each key. On the second day of inputting the teacher called it quits. Otherwise, the student would have been at the computer until midnight, hacking away with one finger.

Technology has its limits, of course. This writer, however, does not.

The writer is a seventh-grade student at a rural school in South Carolina. She has failed two grades. She is black. She is poor. She is a participant in the South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Project, and her story is the argument for humane, student-centered, linguistic education in the schools. Such education is the purpose of the South Carolina project.

In cross-age tutoring projects, groups of older, at-risk students tutor younger at-risk students in reading and writing several times a week. The older students record field notes concerning the tutoring sessions. Once a week, the older students write to the director of the project to report their activity. The director responds to the students with questions and suggestions. The agenda is linguistic improvement for the older students.

Theoretically, the project proceeds on the assumption that when students learn to analyze and to interpret and to explain the purpose of written language they also learn to control written language. A further assumption is that when students engage in linguistic investigation, they escape the skill-driven type of activity that limits linguistic development. Their linguistic analysis and interpretation occur via their field notes and letters.

In South Carolina, the project is just two years old.* It includes five sites. Four of the sites involve rural elementary and middle schools. The fifth site involves an urban college and high school. ("Urban" is used a bit loosely here--the schools are urban for South Carolina!)

The South Carolina Project is based on a model developed by Shirley Brice Heath and others in a program to encourage the acquisition of literate (American) behaviors by Spanish-speaking children in northern California. Yet the theory and practice of cross-age tutoring are clearly generalizable. What the project really harnesses is an explosive possibility for learning when students of varying backgrounds and knowledge and experience come together to reach a common goal.

The urban site in South Carolina furnishes an example. This site involves students in a chemistry laboratory. Ninth-grade students in a predominantly black high school travel to an historically black college once a week to work with undergraduate science majors who are conducting experiments as part of their normal course work.

The ninth grade students write lab reports:

> Today in lab we did an observing experiment. This experiment involved looking at things, writing them down, asking, and trying to answer our own questions.
>
> Today in the lab we were dealing with soda and food. The name of the soda is 7-Up, the types of food that were used are raisins, grapes, cranberries, beans, and macaroni.

The director points out interesting features of these lab reports:

> Well, kids, this write-up is a monument to mediocrity. As far as I can tell none of you really knew what was happening. Nobody gave me any details about what the experiment looked like, what you did, what you said, what you thought.

The students try again:

> Today I don't know what really happened step by step in the lab, but I know by reading the worksheed it was about the solvay process--preparation of sodium bicarbonate.

An undergraduate tutor writes about her tutees:

> The both of them have complained about having to do so much writing. I explained to them the importance of communication and expression. They seemed to agree with my "speech." Other than those few things, we are progressing and not regressing, which I know is very important.

The site coordinator writes, "I have been thinking about one way to determine whether the tutees are learning and that is by asking them to write something I should have asked from the very beginning. What is an experiment?"

Withing this matrix of scientific experimentation and networked communication, the possibilities for education are real. The students are learning to be wise and able scientists as they learn to read, write and interpret laboratory information. They are learning to analyze and explain the radical differences between scientific discourse and real-world language. They are noting the difference between lab-talk and lab-reporting. They enjoy jargon. Recently, they got a computer, and the first thing the women did was to write to the men that "you fellows can do much, much better in the lab" (which provided a nice introduction to gender politics in science). The situation can promote opportunities for budding scientists; it can also promote a student examination of science itself.

The other sites demonstrate rich possibilities, as well. One site matches tenth through twelfth graders with sixth graders. They are reading and writing and rewriting short stories. anther matches sixth and seventh graders with first graders to help the first graders learn their ABC's, read sentences aloud, compose stories, and so on. The sites are limited only by the usual restrictions of time (school bells and buzzers) and conformity.

Perhaps a note on that is in order here. Conformity is a serious, undermining problem. The rigid, imposed scedules and systems of testing and tracking undercut any effort to be flexible or creative in classrooms. They shut down the very thing they presume to allow: the opportunity for education to afford better lives. In South Carolina, where thousands of the state's students live in rural--and racial--poverty, that is of particular importance. The students whose linguistic cultures and habits diverge from the usual white standards are the students shunted into the most confined, highly disciplined classes in the school system. The effect on the teachers of these students differs little from the effect on the students. Both groups are demoralized, angry, and at odds with each other. But the effect on the Cross-

Age Tutoring Project is profound, also. The project must always do battle. The reason to keep battling is that the project shows that education and linguistic improvement can be a source of hope.

The poverty of the students in the South Carolina project is an overarching fact. The average annual family income of 75% of the students in the college in the project is under $8,000. At four of the sites, almost all of the students are black. With almost no exception, all of the students are from rural backgrounds. Twenty percent of the students at one of the most isolated sites live in a school for unwanted and abused children.

The project asks a lot of these students. Learning to analyze, interpret, and control language is not easy to do. The only reason that many people can do it is that they belong to the class of people who make the rules (thus they rarely need to analyze language). The students in the project clearly do not belong to that class. Nevertheless, these students have the abilities to penetrate linguistic mysteries. That is something that education for better lives has to do, penetrate mysteries.

We have to be careful, however, when dealing with populations of students like this. There is something very persuasive and extraordinarily moving about individual moments in this project. A student stands up to read before a class for the first time. A student draws hearts all over a letter. A student drags you by the arms and begs you to take her home with you where she can write books. But these are not the moments that fuel the project, and they are *not* the moments that will effect institutional change in the schools.

The final letter in the fall of 1987 by the writer whose letters opened this essay testifies to larger goals. The letter came all packaged up in a self-contained wad of notebook paper engineering. On the front was a flap and written on the flap was the word PULL. So, I pulled.

The letter began, "Yes, Ms. Stuckey, I would like to have a celebration. A rock party is the best kind to have." Then, the writer listed five items to bring to the party (for the children she and her classmates had been tutoring). The writer also included another list of the materials the project needed. "We need notebooks," she said, and pens and money. She added a P. S.: "I hope you have a nice Xmas, okay. And I still want that computer."

The letter is remarkable for linguistic reasons. The writer, after less than three months of the project is writing longer, more responsive and more articulate letters. Johnessia is telling me what I need to know.

The letter is remarkable for its role in expanding the limits of linguistic possibility. Accompanying Johnessia's letter is a letter from another student--one of Johnessia's classmates. The columned, all-caps sentences look suspiciously familiar:

> DEAR MRS. STUCKEY
>
> HOW ARE LIFE TREATING THESE DAY. MRS. STUCKEY LET ME GET TO THE POINT ABOUTYESTERDAY. ISALLY TRY MY BEST TO HELP THOSE KIDS OUT BUT, SOMETIME IWISH THAT ICAN JUST STAY WITH THEM FEW LONG.

This is the first letter this writer has composed on the computer. She was taught by the first writer.

The message from "I Sally" is a tentative version of the message from Johnessia. Sally does not yet ask for a personal computer. She simply wants a few more minutes to spend with the first grader she tutors--a reasonable request.

Education should foster such linguistic development, a development that will empower students. Right now, Johnessia and Sally request computers, crayons, and rock music. One day they will come of age and their requests will change. As they do, the will develop as persons in a social context, and, by example, they will challenge that context and expand the meaning and forms of education.

On this basis, the South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Project goes forward. On this basis, too, it will come of age.

*This article was written for *Bread Loaf and the Schools* in 1988.

Cross-Age Tutoring in Branchville

by Mildred Able
Branchville High School
Branchville, South Carolina

Students in the Cross-age Tutoring Program at Branchville High tutor students at Branchville Elementary School. We have three different groups, by class periods, that ride on a van or activity bus to the nearby elementary school for the tutoring sessions.

When we arrive there, the elementary children are ready and eager to read a story to the high school students. The high school students ask questions about the story and have them read portions back to them. The older students listen to the younger students read and help them with difficult words.

The older students act as teachers, see problems, and try working them out. The high school tutors work hard to help their tutees enjoy reading, enjoy learning, and improve in their reading. They keep records of what they do each day and write letters to the project director, Dr. Elspeth Stuckey, informing her of what went on during the week. Sometimes these letters are written on the computer and sent by electronic mail. The students love using electronic mail.

The project purchases many books and materials, in many cases at the students' request. Students fill out the forms for the materials they would like, and when they receive the materials they then send a response back to the director, acknowledging the receipt and stating how they've used the materials that were sent.

Scheduling the students, so that older remedial students have reading at the same time as their tutees is the the most difficult aspect of the project. Especially with the problems of scheduling, the support of teachers and administrators is absolutely necessary. In fact, the success of cross-age tutoring at Branchville can be directly attributed to such support.

The older students feel elated that the elementary children look up to them and enjoy their tutoring. The rewards are great. At the end of the year, the students have read many books. We hope they will continue to read and will want to read more and more.

The Cross-Age Tutoring Project

by Donna Durante

Thornwell Elementary School, South Carolina

My class consists of twelve at-risk students ranging from thirteen to fifteen years old. They each tutor one student from the first or second grade.

Our students are certainly benefiting from the Cross-age Tutoring Project. This project has not only helped them with reading skills but also writing skills, socialization skills, and self-esteem. At the same time twelve elementary students are also being rewarded in various ways.

It is great to know that a district can provide all this without spending a lot of money--and our project doesn't cost much. Transportation is provided by the district. Every Tuesday and Thursday a school bus takes us to Thornwell Elementary. The district also provides various books for our students to use, and in addition, our students check out books at Thornwell's library. Dr. Elspeth Stuckey, Director of South Carolina Cross-age Tutoring, also provides my class with pens and paper, so the students don't have to buy materials for a journal. These are the only materials needed in order to have a successful program. Beyond that, all that's necessary is great student-tutor interaction and teacher-student interaction.

Every Monday and Wednesday my students make up their lesson plans for Tuesday and Thursday. At 8:20 on those days we go to Thornwell. The tutors visit with their students' teacher. This is to see how the student is doing and what needs to be done. On Tuesdays the tutors take their students to the library. Once they have checked out a book, they go to the cafeteria, where the tutoring takes place. The tutors usually read the book to the students and then ask them questions about it. If time allows the tutees then read the book to the tutors. At 8:50 we take the students back to their class and let their teacher know how they did. When we return to our school the tutors write in their journals for ten minutes. Thursdays are basically the same. The tutors carry out Tuesday lesson plans, go over reading words, or help students with their spelling words. On Friday morning, the tutors write Dr. Stuckey a letter to let her know how they are doing.

The format we have been following this year has been successful. The only thing I dislike is the small amount of time the tutors spend with the students. I think we need longer than twenty minutes of actual working time. The lesson plans have helped make the tutors more responsible and better prepared. Going in the morning has also helped. It seems both sets of students are more eager to be there. Having all the students in the cafeteria has certainly been wonderful, because I can make sure everybody is staying on task. When tutors are absent, Mr. Haynesworth, my assistant, and I fill their shoes, but the students are disappointed when their tutor is out.

Obviously, both schools are benefiting from this wonderful program. I hope the information I have provided will encourage other teachers around the state to start similar programs.

Cross-Age Tutoring for Special Learners

by Susan Harrison
Orangeburg, South Carolina

I teach a self-contained educable mentally handicapped class of students ranging in age from five years to seventeen years. Their reading grade levels range from primer to fourth grade. This is our second year with the program, and I consider it to be time well spent. The advantages I have found in having a Cross-age Tutoring program are:

-increased socialization skills
-increased writing skills
-increased reading skills
-increased desire to become a better reader

I am attaching several forms that I have designed specifically for my students and their tutors to use during the project. We have used our Bread Loaf project to incorporate various types of learning situations. Below is a list of activities we use in our program.

1. Every student is expected to check out one book to use in the program from week to week.

2. After the tutors read during each session, they are required to write the following in a notebook:
    a. the names of tutor and tutee
    b. date
    c. the title of the book
    d. the author of the book
    e. one sentence telling the main idea (or non-readers draw a picture).

3. When students finish reading a book, they have a worksheet to complete with their tutor.

4. The students also write letters to Dr. Elspeth Stuckey describing their experiences. In addition, they write to pen pals within the Bread Loaf program in other school districts. We are beginning to use the computers to send our letters by electronic mail.

Tips for Tutors

1. Be an understanding tutor
2. Be a friendly tutor.
3. Have fun.
4. Ask questions that will make your tutee think.
5. Use the worksheet as a guide to help you.
6. Decide who is responsible for bringing a book to read.
7. Always talk about what you did the last time you read.
8. Be sure to review the following:
    a. the name of the book;
    b. the author;
    c. the main idea of the story.

Cross-Age Tutoring Worksheet

Name
Date
1. Name of the book?
2. Name of the author?
3. When did the story take place?
4. Where did the story happen?
5. What was the story about?
6. Did you like the story? Why or why not?
7. Did you finish the story? If not, write your page number down so you will know where to begin next time.

South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Request Form

1. I am requesting the following materials to use in the South Carolina Cross-age Tutoring program:
a.
b.
2. I am going to use these materials with my tutees in the following ways:
a.
b.
3. I think these materials will cost this amount of money:
a.
b.
4. I am going to keep these materials in the following place:
a.
b.
5. I will let you know in the following ways how the matierials worked with my tutee.
a.
b.

Response Form

Please fill out these forms after you have recieved the material you requested. Thanks.

1. The material I requested was:
2. The material I received was:
3. The cost of the material was:
4. The material told stories about the following things:
a.
b.
c.
5. Listed below are some of the things we did with the material:
a.
b.
c.
6. I think my tutee learned the following things:
a.
b.
c.
7. The problems I had were:
8. I recommend that other tutors use this material in the following ways:
a.
b.
c.
9. What did you learn about tutoring when you used this material?

The *Gems* Project

by Larry De Blois

Maranacook Community School
Readfield, Maine

My Bread-Loaf-in the-Schools Grant gave me $15,000 over three years. Initially my idea was to let students in five classrooms in our four rural elementary schools write on a daily basis and, twice a year, to publish their choice of writings in *Gems*, the project magazine. I enlisted the aid of two first grade teachers in Readfield, and the sixth grade teachers in Manchester, Mount Vernon and Wayne. My instructions were that the children had to write daily about what they knew and that the teacher could not use grammar or spelling lessons as the basis for the children's writing. I also cautioned them about giving topics to the children, even those who all but begged for one.

I allowed the first graders to publish one story of their choice per month, since their writings were single sentences most of the time, and at times, there was more drawing than writing. The sixth graders got to choose one story per semester to have me edit and then publish. Naturally, their stories were more lengthy.

I visited each school once a month for about half a day. With the first graders, who turned out to be my favorite, I walked around nearly on my knees and had them show me their favorite writing for the month. Usually, it turned out to be the writing they had done that day. They read me what they had written and I congratulated them and moved on.

With the sixth graders, I made suggestions on how to improve the content and gave them terms like "lead" and "conclusion," and the "Secret of Once" (Ken Macrorie's term). I also taught them how to begin in the middle of things. Occasionally I made students cut irrelevant parts from their writing.

Then, in December and May, all the teachers (through volunteers or their own labor) managed to get the stories entered on their word processors. I provided them with a word processing program (AppleWriter) and data disks. Then I collected the disks and laid out the magazine to make it camera ready. (I did not remove any words nor correct any spelling unless it interfered with the message. I told each student that I considered proofreading to be the job of the writer.) In January and in June, I returned with a magazine for each child in the project, as well as one for the principal, the library and each school board member.

I asked all the writers to autograph their stories in my copy since they were now famous, having been published (something I haven't been able to accomplish). Handing out the magazines turned out to be quite a celebration. It also taught the students what it means to write for a larger audience than the classroom. Mount Vernon students might all know where Mack Kelly's garage is but the students from the other schools had no idea at all. They also had a chance to compare what they wrote with what their peers in the other schools wrote. Most found out that their stories compared favorably with the others in the magazine. I also noticed that in the second semester, they were much more concerned to proofread in detail since, as I've stated above, I did little correcting of spelling. At first, they berated me for having misspellings and awkward phrasings in the magazine. Once I pointed out that I only printed out what they had entered on the class disks, they accepted the responsibility for their own work and paid closer attention.

After the first year, I enlisted six more teachers and a total of 220 students. I intended to involve every classroom in the district, but that was not possible given budget and time constraints.

About four times a year, all the teachers in the project and I went out to dinner. Paul Cubeta gave me this idea; I never would have thought of it. It turned out to be a stroke of genius. Treating the teachers to dinner made them feel like the professionals that they are. Going to dinner also gave them a chance to meet with the teachers from the other three schools and to talk shop. Except for our dinners, they only got to see each other once a year when all K-12 teachers meet to listen to the superintendent give us his pep talk to start the year. In addition, I gave the teachers a token stipend. They were amazed and thrilled to get it each year. Teachers are unused to being paid for their work.

When the Project ended, I suggested to the teachers that they could publish their own version of *Gems*, and in Readfield, the teachers in grades first through third did just that. Last spring, they asked if they could use *Gems* as the name and I agreed to let them. The system I set up needs only a computer print-out and a photocopier. It does require an expenditure for paper and we've just been run aground on perilous economic times, so two of the principals are reluctant to budget for the extra paper and copier use.

What did we accomplish with all that time and money?

1. The writing skills of the students coming to my school, Maranacook, the district middle-senior high school, improved. Presently, I am teaching some of the students I had in the project. I can see how much more fluent they are compared to my other students who weren't part of the project. One of my colleagues who is new to Maranacook remarked how fluent her students were in writing, compared to the students she had in her previous school that is not part of our district. Our students consistently score above the state average in writing and reading.

2. The project gave eleven teachers the self-confidence in their ability to teach writing. I spent time in the first year of the project writing letters to the teachers explaining what I saw happening in their classrooms, what I thought they did well and where they could improve. Now that the project is over, they still have their skill and confidence and will continue to send me students who know how to make meaning in writing.

Teaching the teachers earns benefits for years after. I am confident that the students entering seventh grade at my school will have received strong instruction in writing in the elementary schools. My colleagues and I will be able to take the students further because of the work of the project.

3. We researched and wrote a whole language K-12 language arts curriculum. Since six of the people on the committee were involved in the project, they were advocates for whole language because they had experienced its power. We overcame several attacks from grammarians on the committee and convinced them that our way made sense. We convinced the superintendent and all our school board members of the value of whole language as well.

4. We found that every student is different. I taught a first grade girl how to use quotation marks to show when someone was talking. I showed a sixth grade boy how to begin in the middle of things and then flash back to the beginning.

5. We proved that every student has something to say. Given time daily to write, students from first through sixth grades could write personal experiences that were interesting to a large audience. They never did run out of things to say.

6. We published every student in the project, or at least every student who submitted something for publication. *Gems* was not a literary magazine where we chose just the cream of the cream. All 220 students got published twice a year. They chose what pieces they wanted in the magazine and we helped them to polish their choices. When they got their magazines, however, they were as eager to read the stories written by their friends as they were to find their own. We helped show them that they were writers and had something to say. After all, we spent all that time and money producing what they wrote. This aspect of the project had the most profound effect on the students. All the assertions in the world about the worth of their writing could not match seeing their stories in *Gems*.

7. The teachers in the project convinced their school boards to send them to the Language Institute in Vermont for a week in the summer, expenses paid. Before the project, they did not have the desire. After working in the project for one year, they were confident and eager enough to request and be granted the chance to study more about whole language.

In all, the project was a great deal of work and money but well worth the expenditure. I expect that I succeeded in proving what many others already knew: Students, when given time and encouragement, can write with power about their daily lives and loves; publishing their work only makes them want to write more and better; correctness follows having something to say--it doesn't precede it.

The name Bread Loaf is revered in my district, among the students who participated and their parents. They still have their copies of *Gems*. These students view writing as something pleasurable. Now, when I get them in class, I'm reaping the benefits that I sowed. All that work was worth it.

The Drama/Writing Project

by Bill Durbin

Cook High School
Cook, Minnesota

During the three-year period that we enjoyed Bingham Trust funding at Cook High School, I noticed a gradual increase in enthusiam for writing. Along with this growing excitement about writing, there was also a definite increase in competence. External measurements of success included three students recognized as "New Voices" in *Minnesota Writing* by Bemidji State University, two students awarded State Arts Boards scholarships to attend summer writing workshops, one student awarded first place in the state-wide Martin Luther King, Jr., essay contest, another student published in *H.S. Writer* magazine, and several other students published in smaller, regional magazines.

In addition to the successes in publication, Cook students demonstrated that a writing emphasis in the classroom has positive results on standardized tests of language skills. The junior high students who participated in our project scored the highest of any group in our school district, averaging a 95.5% proficiency.

The grant made it possible for us to reach beyond the classroom. Newspapers, regional and local, interviewed our kids about their writing projects. Minnesota Public Radio came to Cook and aired a story about our student-oriented writing program. We received a number of letters and phone calls complimenting us on our work. I was able to publicize our project by publishing in *English Journal, Canadian Author, Bookman, Nebraska Language Arts Bulletin,* and *Bread Loaf News.*

During our period of grant support, the focus was on drama. For the first two years we sponsored professional playwright residencies that introduced students to the fundamentals of writing for stage. The students enjoyed these intensive periods of improvisation, writing, re-writing, and in-class performances.

In our final year we went one step further--writing and performing a collaborative play for the community. The process of going from the blank space of the page to a live performance developed into the most comprehensive language learning experience I have witnessed in my fifteen years of teaching.

Our project began in mid-winter when Jaime Meyer, a resident of the Playwright's Center in Minneapolis, introduced the basic techniques of theatrical composition to our students. When it concluded in early spring with the help of another playwright/actor, Buffy Sedlachek, the students had written, produced, and performed a one-act play. The 700 people (the imediate population of our town is only 800) who attended the show were highly appreciative. As a result, the cast, crew, and supporting members of the seventh grade class experienced that magical feeling that comes from mounting a successful production.

The second element we focused on during the grant was word processing/networking. Cook High School was the sponsoring agent of BreadNet's Workshop sub-conference. Workshop gave us the capacity to share student writing simultaneously with all the schools on the BreadNet system. Students who posted work received responses from other network students, and responses included any and all combinations of student to student and student to teacher comments, criticism, and rebuttals.

The students appreciated the breadth of their audience--eight states and countries--and they were impressed that their writing evoked such vital commentary. Peer analysis offered constructive criticism based on close textual readings of the students' short stories, letters, essays, poetry, and play excerpts.

The last component of our grant work involved the Cook Children's Summer Theatre. Over a three-year period, Kathy Scharfenberg, our local director, helped seventy-five students produce six plays. The casts ranged in age from six to twelve years, and my junior and senior high students helped write and/or direct a number of the plays.

In the time since our grant expired, I have been encouraged by support that has come from within our school system for both writing and word processing. We now have a district-wide technology committee which is doing its best to see that our students have access to educationally beneficial hardware and software. Our English classes can now use the computer lab for word processing, and our Learning Resource Center has computers available for students who whish to write during study periods. Modems have been purchased for each school in our system, providing us access to the Minnesota-based McGraw Hill Network.

I can testify to the cost-effectiveness of grants that go directly to classrooms. Projects which are initiated on a "higher level" often fail because too much money is absorbed by administrative costs, or because teachers resent plans and ideas that are imposed or dictated to them. Even in instances where there is a philosophical common ground, adminstratively-inspired projects often fail because administrators seldom communicate their ideas clearly to teachers in the field.

I've often wondered what would happen if we went to the kids and said, "We want you to become better writers. Here is the checkbook--spend the money in ways that will help you reach that goal." If additional funds were ever made available to Cook School again, my first step would be to approach the kids and ask them for ideas.

I would advise anyone--who is interested in funding a writing project--to study the community in detail, to examine the resources it has available, and to determine what local talents and skills can be brought into the classroom. If the grant has a local focus, there will be a greater chance that its effectiveness will continue even after the official funding has lapsed. Although it is easy to write a proposal that satisfies the immediate needs of a school, it is much more difficult to author a grant that brings about meaningful, long-term change.

Some Benefits of Networking: A Letter to BreadNet

by John Forsyth
Livingston, Montana

In the fall of 1990, when I changed schools, I went from a situation in which networking has been an integral part of the language arts program for five years to a district which hadn't heard of it. Although many students in Wilsall, where I taught previously, had never physically left the state of Montana, they were world travelers. We could discuss life in New York or Kentucky or the Carolinas; we could talk of environmental issues, or memorable disputes with fellow students around the country. Real talk about a world much larger than Montana.

In my present situation, students come from a larger town, with more resources in many ways, but their view of this country and their world is much more narrow. What is that difference worth? Far more than what it has "cost."

A few weeks ago, I appeared before a "Principal's Advisory Council" to explain the potentials of networking. I described a few of the BreadNet projects of the past, and then I read some letters from ninth graders here to some middle schoolers in New York. Students encouraged students to think and write and feel and be somebody. Up to this point, the English department in this school has had no real access to computers, let alone networking. Now, a few weeks after one meeting with some parents and a few discussions with administrators, there is a dedicated modem line in the library, and an Apple II lab as well as a Mac lab in the budget for next year.

All because of the potential they see in a BreadNet or BreadNet-like program? No. But the vision I shared with them had much to do with it.

The Bingham trustees have helped to start something. It's not a simple something, it's not a clear something, but it is a very good something.

I taught a class the other day, using a big pan of water and a small pebble. I dropped the pebble, and we watched what happened. You can't tell when the ripples from what we do here will stop. I suspect that they won't.

Concrete evidence of progress? In a week or so, a model communication arts curriculum will be published here in Montana. The entire document exhibits, I think, an integrative approach, and encourages, from K thru 12, the use of computer networking right along with other productive activities for students. The good ideas I've gotten as a recipient of the resources computer networking has to offer made their way into the model, because many other good teachers saw their value. Districts around the state will be using the document as they work to meet new accreditation standards. Big ripple, huh?

Networking from Students' Perspective

by John Forsyth
Livingston, Montana

Notice: Names and facts have been changed. The truth remains unchanged.

An early spring day in Wilsall, Montana, a blemish on Highway 89. It is inhabited by 150 people who should know better. To the east, the flanks of the Crazies disappear into the fog of a snow sqall. All is quiet in town, except for the occasional sound of tires on wet pavement, as trucks head to northern or southern destinations.

Inside a cafe, several college-aged people and one middle-aged man sit around two cheap tables pushed together in the center of the room. Glasses of beer and soft drinks populate the tables. As a pickup truck rolls past, the front door creaks open.

Marty: There you are, Greg. You still don't know how to get anywhere on time (chuckles).

Greg: Martins, I got to college. More than I can say for you.

Forsyth: OK. I'm not paying for the food so you clowns can fight. Greg, have a seat. How's it going?

Greg: Pretty good, Mr. Forsyth. It's spring break. I'm passing. One more year to go.Hi, Alison. It's been a while.

Alison (embarrassed by memories): Hi, Greg.

Erin: Mr. Forsyth, I've still got to take some feed up to Ibex Mountain tonight. Could we do whatever we're supposed to do?

Forsyth: Let's order.

[They order.]

Forsyth: Guys, I appreciate your coming out tonight. I thought Amy would be here. I guess she couldn't make it. The Bread Loaf School of English has asked me to give them some kind of report on what happened with computer networking at Wilsall School over the years.

Marty: That's easy. Nothing.

Mick: Martins, grow a brain.

Forsyth: Well, Marty, you're entitled to your opinion if that's what you really think. You others--what stands out--what do you remember best about the networking?

Erin: That's not hard. Greg, remember those guys from New York? Let's see, one wrote an essay on baseball and how it was the greatest game--remember?

Greg: Yeah, I remember. He made fun of somebody's poetry--somebody from another school. I got mad and I shafted him pretty good on his essay.

Forsyth: What do you mean, you shafted him?

Greg: I went to the library and checked some facts. He had it all wrong, and I proved it. It was pretty neat, I thought.

Teri: You think trying to make somebody look bad is neat, huh? You haven't changed much.

Greg: Maybe not. But that kid deserved it. Him and his fancy Eastern ways.

Marty: You can say that again. Some of those people back there are pretty strange. Mick, remember that one note where a girl said she lived on a five acre farm? We wrote back and told her we called five acres a yard out here.

Mick: I remember. But their ground's a lot different from ours. Five acres can grow a lot back there.

Teri: That's right. I don't know why you have to cut everybody down. I learned a lot from writing back and forth. Especially the piece I wrote about the murder of Leo Becker. We put it up on World--World something...

Forsyth: World Trade.

Teri: Yeah. People wrote back and said they really liked it. I worked hard to get that story; I was proud of it. When I got comments back, I knew I'd done a good job.

Forsyth: That's right. Alison, remember that contrasting scenes essay you wrote on Brazil? They were sure impressed with that.

Alison: I know. I couldn't believe that. I didn't want to put it up on the network to begin with. I got pretty mad at you; you kept telling me it could be better.

Forsyth: That was my first year here. I don't think you believed me until kids on the network confirmed what I'd said. Even your old teacher told you how good it was, in the network. Remember?

Alison: Yes. I didn't believe anything you said until then. Did you know that?

Forsyth: I had a pretty good idea. I'm not blind--yet. I was proud of you. And let's face it. You needed to hear other voices, not just Montana voices.

As I listen to this, I'm a little worried. I'm hearing some good things, but it sounds like you still think people from back East are another life form. Do you sincerely believe that?

Mick: Well, Mr. Forsyth, they act like the whole world revolves around them.

Teri: Now wait a minute. Those kids in Kentucky and Virginia sounded like us. Small towns and hard work, old people and memories. And they were always nice to us. I think we learned that we're the same. They have a history worth knowing, just like us. And they have a future too, like us, if they just see it.

Marty: Oh, I think I'm gonna cry.

Greg: Shut up, Marty. She's right. I even admired those New York kids. At least they had the guts to say what they thought. I have to admit that I learned something.

Forsyth: What's that?

Greg: If you know something and it's right, it's just as right in New York City as it is on Horse Creek (pronounced "crick").

Forsyth: Hmmm. OK. A question. Do you think that all the networking helped your writing?

Erin: Sure.

Forsyth: Well, what...

Erin: I always worked to get things correct. I didn't want everybody to see mistakes when they read what I had to say. I think that was a good habit to get into.

Mick: You're right. I still can't spell. But I learned to use a dictionary sitting in front of that computer.

Alison: Not being afraid to share your ideas. How can you be a real writer unless you share it with someone? I didn't like to read my stuff in class; it was easier to let strangers see it. I don't know why.

Teri: I didn't mind sharing in class, but seeing the writing from elsewhere and sharing it helped me, too. You assume that everybody thinks like you. I learned to, to...

Forsyth: Question your assumptions.

Teri: Yeah. I think about my assumptions when I write now. You always told us to do that, Mr. Forsyth, but BreadNet showed me. I knew people on the network weren't just like me, so I had to explain. And I could tell when other writers were assuming too much, because I didn't know what they were talking about.

Forsyth: Fair enough. Question. Is this place you all come from any better, any worse than the other places we've visited on the network?

Mike: You're still asking those crazy questions. We're not better or worse. But we're not like anybody else. How about some more onion rings?

Forsyth: Eat your dinner. If you still want something after that, we'll see. Keep in mind I still work for a teacher's salary.

Bread Loaf-in-the-Schools Bethel Project

by Will and Marguerite Graham
Bethel, Maine

The Bethel project began in 1986 as a three year grant awarded us and funded at $5000 per year. We received an additional two years of funding at $3000 the fourth year and $1500 the fifth and final year.

During the first four years of funding we invited teachers in Maine School Administrative District 44 (SAD 44) to meet weekly with us to discuss issues surrounding student writing. The fifth and final year of funding incorporated the BreadNet telecommunications program into the project.

Throughout the five years of the Bethel Project, grant funding was supplemented by contributions from businesses, foundations, and individuals in SAD 44. Total funding from outside sources amounted to $8,500 which combined with Bingham/Bread Loaf funding to provide for a five-year total of $28,000.

Teacher Participant Reflection:

Elizabeth O'Meara: Grade Three Crescent Park School (four-year project participant)

It is my understanding that five years ago few teachers in SAD 44 were aware of the learning theories behind writing process. The Bread Loaf grant gave teachers the opportunity to explore writing process weekly with their colleagues in a non-threatening setting and daily with their students. Five years later, all teachers in my school give their students daily time for writing. In some classes a daily journal is the only writing opportunity, but more commonly, a daily chunk of time is set aside for directed and non-directed writing and conferencing.

Final drafts of writing are often posted in the hallway, published in the weekly newsletter, shared with other classes, and published as books. Teachers who never participated actively in the Bethel project are valuing daily writing and writing with and to their students.

Many parents have had at least some exposure to process writing classrooms and look forward to their children having frequent opportunities to write. Every year I have parents specifically request to volunteer during writing workshop. The children often share pieces they have written at home, during recess, and with friends.

The school board has heard presentations about the value of frequent opportunities for writing, writing for a purpose, and cross-curriculum writing projects. They support the district's new language curriculum based on the theory that writing as an integral part of all areas of learning. A *language arts coordinator position was recently created and filled due to the changing curriculum and the need for teacher support.*

Test scores in writing are improving. In my own classroom I have seen successive classes of students arrive with more writing confidence and enthusiasm. They not only write in all the curriculum areas, but also record ideas in cooperative groups, write suggestions for class meetings, take notes for information, write notes to the principal and to me. My third graders conference and revise with an awareness of the value of re-thinking and rewriting, and the process has become as important as the product.

Opportunities for real writing have become more available to students and teachers. Several teachers include student writing in their newsletters. A school-business partnership will soon be publishing book reviews by students and teachers in this four district area of western Maine (Elizabeth O'Meara originated this project). Telecommunications have begun throughout the district with the intent of having students share their opinions, stories, and letters with each other. Recently one math class wrote a set of story problems for another class to solve. An awareness that writing is an appropriate tool for communication and thinking is evident throughout the district.

As for advice to other teachers and students planning or hoping to be involved in a funded writing project, I would suggest starting small and keeping intentions and goals clear. It's important that everyone understands why the change is taking place from one set of values to another. Teachers may expect problems to crop up, but they can take time to talk about them and try to solve them together. Participants must get support from the administration. It's very hard to work for change, and support from the top can make a tough swim against the current much easier. Teachers should keep track not only of the progress they make, but the process they go through to make the project work. A good project needs plenty of time to develop. Fundamental changes in attitude or values can take years to accomplish. I have seen a lot of changes in our district in the last year, and we are now in our fifth year of funding.

Norma Salway: Kindergarten at Crescent Park School (four-year participant)

The project has provided me with the support and direction to carry out many successful writing projects. As a result of an article which I received at the writing group, I launched a new approach to teaching the invented spelling method to kindergarten students. Many of these students are now writing their own sentences and stories.

Brenda Wight: Grade Three Crescent Park School (four-year participant)

Writing has become a big part of each school day. Students have now begun writing stories in groups, writing plays, poems, etc. I see lots of excitement in their writing.

Melanie Ellsworth: Grade One Woodstock Elementary School (five-year participant)

I feel more than anything else that I am constantly learning, growing, changing, questioning, and expanding. I am not content to settle in and know that my teaching will stay the same. This might sound as though I'm always in a state of turmoil (sometimes I feel I am). It's a good feeling, though, because there is so much unexplored territory out there and it's exciting to be part of the changes that are occuring with education. The weekly meetings are useful to reassure me that others are struggling with the same issues--it's OK to share concerns and ideas, the feeling of camarderie. I know the growth I have made would be lost without the regular opportunity to share ideas, reflect and listen to peers.

Linda Wheeler: Grade Five Crescent Park School (five-year participant)

Writing has become a daily part of my curriculum now, and I am growing toward becoming a better teacher of writing with the help of the weekly writing meetings. Writing has become a daily part of my students' life. I continually need to sound out my ideas and hear others. I need to evaluate what I am doing.

History of the Project 1986-1987

When we received word from Bread Loaf that our proposal for a writing project in Bethel had been accepted, we made a formal presentation to the SAD 44 school board. Although we did not need permission to invite teachers to meet with us weekly in order to explore ways to "improve writing proficiency" we later realized that this presentation gave the school board an awareness of the project and a sense of ownership which contributed to board support throughout the five years of Bread Loaf funding.

The project began in the fall of 1986 with a group of fifteen teachers and one principal. Teachers were required to give their students time to write regularly (daily if possible) on self-selected topics, and they had to agree to meet weekly for an hour after school to share and discuss what they discovered when students were given more opportunities to use writing in real situations.

These Thursday afternoon discussions became the foundation for the Bethel project, and as the weeks progressed our role in the project became less of leaders and more of participants. We provided refreshments, made articles and books available on language and learning, and encouraged teachers to consider difficult questions. Each week we recorded minutes and distributed them to all project participants. These weekly reports provided documentation and a way for teachers who missed meetings to keep up with the weekly discussions.

It wasn't long before the Thursday afternoon discourse grew beyond "What happens when we allow students to write regularly?" to issues concerning conferring, revising, and editing with students. As the teachers encouraged students to write multiple drafts, revise, and edit their writing, they began to see the need for students to have opportunities to share and publish their writing for a variety of audiences--realizing that students need a purpose for revision other than a teacher evaluation and grade.

Grant funding helped teachers purchase a monthly page for student writing in *the* local newspaper, and Marguerite was able to supplement funding for this expensive proposition by soliciting contributions from local area businesses. This "Young Voices" page helped parents, businesses, and school board members realize that young children can indeed write, and through this realization, volunteer and financial support for the Bethel project increased.

Grant funding was also used to fund a year-end publication which was designed to include one piece of writing from each student in each classroom participating in the Bethel project. Students and teachers in the graphic arts department at the high school volunteered to help keep costs for this publication affordable by printing, collating, and assembling over 300 copies of the elementary anthologies.

The Bethel project 1987-1988

The Bethel project expanded in 1987 to include twenty-two teachers from four schools in SAD 44. The discussion at the weekly meetings matured to include consideration of questions such as: What is the purpose of student writing? What is publishable? How do we meet individual needs of student writing? How do we encourage thoughtful student response? What makes for a successful student/teacher conference? How do we make time for our own writing? Teaching principal Wendy Ford commented:

> I cannot begin to say how much the grant has influenced and changed my thinking about teaching reading/writing. Perhaps more importantly, the project has given me the courage to change the focus of my room from the teacher to the *children*. I need the support and encouragement of the weekly meetings to encourage and evaluate what happens in the classroom.

The highlight of 1988, and the five years of Bread Loaf Funding, was Bread Loaf professor Nancy Martin's week-long visit to Bethel. Nancy was able to visit classes, interview students, teachers, parents, and administrators, and participate in our weekly writing meetings. Nancy also spent time with the Language Arts Curriculum Review Committee which had just been formed to begin the three-year process of writing a new Language Arts Curriculum. Nancy's impressions of the Bethel Project are written in a report which was published in *Bread Loaf and the Schools* (Spring 1990).

Other highlights of1988 include Jeff Fisher's article about the Bethel Project in the *Maine Times*, students sharing their writing at the Senior Citizen's monthly luncheon, a workshop presentation by four teachers at the Maine-E-Vent (Maine's early elementary teaching conference) and increased financial support from local businesses for publishing projects and the distribution of 350 copies of the "Young Voices" student anthologies.

A violent murder witnessed by two children of the victims took place in Bethel during the fall of 1988 and led us to spend many Thursday afternoons during the third year of the project discussing the influence of violence on student writing. When we invited the school counselor to one of our meetings, he expressed support for the opportunities teachers were giving their students to explore their feelings through their writing.

The previous spring the school board approved a proposal submitted by teachers in our district which was designed to provide for an early release time for students one day a week. This was designed to allow teachers time to participate in discussions centering on how children learn best, in contrast to the management issues that are usually discussed at staff meetings. We hoped this would be a way to institutionalize the discussions that had begun with the Bethel project; however, little information was distributed explaining the reasons behind the new "release time" project. Some parents were wildly opposed when they realized in October that their children would only be in school for a half a day on Wednesdays.

Due to a parent petition and protest, the school board cancelled the proposal at the end of an eight week trial period. Unfortunately this lack of communication on the part of the administration in SAD 44 ended what could have developed into a model program and institutionalized the kind of support teachers were receiving from each other as they addressed difficult writing and educational issues at the weekly Bread Loaf-Bethel project meetings.

The highlight of 1988-1989 was a workshop presentation four teachers presented at the NCTE Spring Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Marguerite discussed the Bethel project focussing on what happens when teachers make time to share discoveries and consider how children learn best. Elizabeth O'Meara (Grade Three), Melanie Ellsworth (Grade Four), and Wendy Ford (Grade Two) shared ways they use writing in their classrooms. Marguerite Graham and Norma Salway (Kindergarten) also made a presentation, "A Hand in Writing," at the Maine-E-Vent.

We will also remember 1989 as the year the group made its biggest mistake and learned one important lesson. The year-end student publication, "Young Voices," failed. When "Young Voices" was printed and ready to be distributed to over 400 eager young writers, there were so many typing, spelling and grammatical errors that the project participants had to make the difficult decision not to distribute the eighty-five page student anthologies.

In retrospect we realize that this publication had grown into a logistical nightmare. Too many people were involved, and no one was really in charge. When new teachers joined the project each year, we had overlooked the importance of reviewing and redefining the guidelines for publication. We all knew that what went out to the public had to be perfect, yet by assuming that each teacher would be the editor of his or her classes' chapter, we had overlooked the need of a final editing board.

The events surrounding this publishing failure, the learning that took place, and the guidelines we developed for publishing future projects are too cumbersome to include in this report. Marguerite Graham has written about this in an article: "Publishing, The Risk of Failure" which is included in Nancie Atwell's *Workshop Three* and will be available in April 1991 (Heinemann).

The Bethel Project 1989-1990

By the fall of 1989 the Bethel project had grown to include over thirty teachers and administrators, and we now realize that the group of teachers involved in the project had become too large. Teachers, some of whom had been participating for four years, found it increasingly difficult to commit to meeting every Thursday afternoon. Each week the group of participants changed to allow for individual schedules, and thus it was difficult for discussions to carry over from one week to the next.

In order to supplement Bread Loaf funding for on-line time we have received funding from the Otten Foundation and we have written and received a grant from the Longview Foundation for "Expanding Horizons"--a project designed to help students use their writing to gain knowledge of communities beyond our isolated area of western Maine.

Teachers involved in the BreadNet project are now working with students to formulate thoughtful questions which will be sent out on BreadNet for responses from students in other areas of the U.S. and abroad. Once the students receive responses they will write articles based on the material they have collected, and they will publish them in a booklet to share with parents and community members. In the spring students will also host an evening presentation for parents and school board members as a final celebration of the project.

Lessons Learned

The fact that neither of us is an administrator or employed by the school district contributed to the trust and support we received from the project participants and ultimately to the success of the project. We are parent volunteers with a background in education, and we entered into this project as a partnership with the elementary teachers and their students, thus making this Bread Loaf-Bethel project a grass-roots organization.

The most important lesson we have learned in our experience with the project is that lasting change takes time. The changes in the SAD 44 Language Arts Curriculum which were influenced by the Bethel project will continue as funding from Bread Loaf ends in the spring of 1991. The curriculum encourages teachers at all grade levels to make time for and use a process approach to student writing as well as to use real literature, instead of basal readers and anthologies, to model writing. Teachers are now exploring ways of using writing in other areas of the curriculum. One sixth grade math teacher has begun to use journals as a way of helping students understand complex concepts.

The curriculum now encourages teachers to model their writing and write with their students. We found it very hard to get teachers to take time to work on their own writing. During the fourth year of the project we put together a publication called "Bits and Pieces" as a place for teachers in the project to share writing about their classroom writing projects, poetry, or any other topics they chose to include. Still, only a handful of teachers submitted articles for "Bits and Pieces" and we published just two issues.

Plans For The Future

The most important spin-off from the Bethel project is the trusting relationship that developed among the SAD 44 teachers, administrators, the Grahams, and Gould Academy. These relationships have laid the foundation for what may become a model partnership between public and private school communities.

We are in the process of seeking funding for a cross-age tutoring project in which Gould Academy students work with Bethel elementary students in a one-on-one tutoring situation designed to help improve writing proficiency.

Writing and War

We've been reading through the pieces of student writing we have collected over the past five years, hoping to find a few that would be appropriate to include in this report. The letter below from the bulletin board of one of the schools, under the question, "What Is Your Opinion?" is perhaps the most fitting. Elizabeth O'Meara's third-grade students have invited teachers and students in all classes to write about their feelings and opinions concerning the events in the Middle East during the Gulf War and then post them for others to read. As we read through letters and essays from parents, teachers, students, administrators, and the Chief Petty Officer from a United States Navy ship stationed in the gulf, we felt the confusion, anger, fear, and patriotism these writers were experiencing regardless of whether they opposed or supported the United States' military action. We've come a long way in SAD 44 from using writing to communicate with Santa or describe summer vacations.

> Monday, Jan. 7, 1991
>
> Dear Sir,
>
> My name is Anna Sysko. I am nine years old. I have been worrying about Iraq and the other countries going to a nuclear war. I hope you are not going to war because a lot of people will get killed and hurt.
>
> Please don't decide to have a war. If we do have it, it will hurt people's feelings bad! Are we going to have a war or not? You don't have to answer my question, but at least say no to war and let Kuwait free! God made this world to be happy and not have war and to live together in peace!
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Anna Sysco
> Grade Three, Crescent Park School

BreadNet: The Native American Network

by Gary Griffith
Page High School
Page, Arizona

I am one of the original members of The Native American Network, since its inception back in January of 1989, when we started beaming out our mutual concerns over the telecommunication lines. Originally, Bill Wright, Lucy Maddox, Cathy Harris, Michelle Barger, and I, all sat down together at Bread Loaf-Vermont during the summer of 1988 and began to plan the formation of a community of teachers who taught Native American students, and a community of Native American students. That year I received the first of the Bingham Trust mini-grants. This year I have received my third grant for $450.

Since those beginnings, the network has grown to include members from all over the continental United States, as well as Alaska. Despite this growth, the original idea has stayed the same. We are still a community of dedicated teachers and friends. The Native American Network has been successful and helpful for me. It provides a resource for the important classroom issues that emerge from the active teaching of writing and literature. The members are always honest and caring. They give me invaluable feedback on teaching that I can't get anywhere else. I depend on the community to help me grow professionally.

I would also like to point out that the bulwark of this support has come form Lucy Maddox. Lucy never misses the mark. She is knowledgeable, honest, tough, and gentle. When she speaks, I listen. I don't think the network could have made it without her. It wouldn't be the same without her presence.

The student writing has been rewarding, but not without its frustrations. The main problem is time. Coordinating student exchanges can stretch an already tight schedule to the breaking point, though the payoffs are great. Navajo students can be joyful, warm, and caring, but they can also be shy and distant. The Network has reached my most reluctant and closed off students. For instance, Eddie Augustine has been a student of mine for several years. I have never known Eddie until I got him on line with the network. His writing was sparse and often unreadable, due to his small handwriting and his private nature. Now, thanks to word processing, and his willingness to open up to other Native Americans, I have him started on a modest but encouraging program.

This is the great value of the network: the intercommunication that it fosters among the tribes. This great revitalization of ethnic awareness and cultural pride truly sets The Native American Network apart.

Directly and indirectly, the network has changed the writing program at Page High School. We now have a literary magazine. We have Native Americans writing about their own lives and learning about the cultures of others.

This year my principal has actively supported the network by installing four IBM computers, a modem, and a phone link so I can begin transmitting out of the classroom directly.

I hope that we can somehow continue to keep this project alive. We now have linked both ends of the Navajo Reservation. Writing is a democratic process, and the Native American Network has given my students the opportunity to grow culturally and to further develop their literacy skills.

Writing Program For Sophomore English

by Anne Harmon
Edisto High School
Orangeburg, South Carolina

This year our school was finally released from the skill-driven program designed by Dr. Wise--a program that mandated not only the skills teachers would teach, but also the day on which each of those skills would be taught. The elementary and middle schools in the district still follow his program, but because of our high scores on the exit exam, and because of our many complaints, the administration decided to give the high school more freedom. So for the first time in four years, I do not have to teach an isolated skill for the first fifteen minutes of each class period.

This is my second year as department chair, and I teach five classes of sophomore English. Last year ninety-four percent of my students passed the writing portion of the exit exam. I teach a cross-section of tenth graders, including all of our lowest-track students.

My writing program consists of the following:

1. Journals. They write them every Monday, at least one page on any subject they desire. No restrictions on topics except they must be subjects of common decency! I guarantee that no one will see the journals except me, and they may fold down as many as three entries that they don't want me to read. I turn through the journals once every quarter, and if all entries are there, dated, the student gets a grade of A as a major test grade. Journals go home only once a quarter, for students to make up missed work. They keep them at the end of the year.

2. Sophomore English is divided into literary genres, so after we study each type of literature, students try their hand at writing their own. So far they have written their own short stories and will soon write poetry.

3. Essays. We do more personal experience essays than any other writing, mainly because they are easy for students--and because of the exit exam. They will write at least a dozen of these three or four paragraph essays before the exit exam in April. It is a two-day process. One day we do prewriting and rough drafts in class, and the next day we write final drafts. I take about a week to mark each essay, and the following week students rewrite the essays, following the suggestions and corrections I have made. All of this student work is done in class. They know they will not pass for the quarter if all essays are not done.

4. Extra tutoring in writing: By February I have identified those students most likely not to pass the exit exam. I have eight after-school tutoring sessions, in which I counsel individually these students about their essays. They write an

essay per week and bring them to the sessions. To keep students coming, I take them on a field trip the week after the exit exam. Those who have been faithful attenders get to miss a day of school to go on this trip. We have been to the zoo, the state museum, and this year will go to Charleston.

Concerning my Bread Loaf grant: The year after I was at Bread Loaf, I had a $500.00 grant. That year we produced a magazine of student writing, mostly short stories and poetry. It is difficult to sustain the things we learned at Bread Loaf about writing, especially when there is no one else in the school who knows what you're talking about. I highly recommend that at least two teachers be included as participants at the same time, so there will be some local support!

Bread Loaf certainly did make a difference in my life and in my teaching. I try always to humanize my writing instruction and acknowledge the value of my students' writing, just as it is, even though it has to be polished up for outside review.

BreadNet: The Missing Link for Writers

by Ken Holvig

Scarsdale Junior High School
Scarsdale, New York

A BreadNetter from its inception, I have evolved from non-techie English teacher to hi-tech English teacher, to my current position as the computer coordinator at Scarsdale Junior High School. That evolution is due in large part to my involvement with Bread Loaf and BreadNet. And most of what I accomplished and learned was made possible by funding from Bread Loaf and the Bingham Trust for Charity. The formula is simple. Give teachers a reason to learn something new; provide them with the necessary funding, equipment and training; provide on-going support; expect results and you will get them.

After my first summer at Bread Loaf (1983), I returned to my classroom fired up and armed with a classroom grant. That year I conducted a classroom research project and returned to Bread Loaf the following summer with cartons of student writing, a daily personal log and a report on the project. I was eager to share my discoveries with my colleagues.

During that next summer at Bread Loaf (1984), the idea of BreadNet emerged, and, with that same attitude of sharing, a number of us returned to our schools with new hope that we would be able to keep the banter of the barn (once left behind in Vermont with the deer flies and the Adirondack chairs) alive throughout the school year. Those voices now travel daily into schools and home-offices and classrooms all around the nation through the miracle that is BreadNet.

BreadNet provides a global audience for my student writers and gives them genuine reasons for writing in the first place. During the four years that I had access to BreadNet while an English teacher at Clarkstown South High School, I relied heavily on it as a way of providing incentive for my students and as a place for work above and beyond normal activities. BreadNet does not replace traditional teaching and writing. Rather, it offers an alternative to in-class peer editing and sharing though forums like the conferences including Workshop, World Trade and World Class. My students, as in the excerpts below, speak of BreadNet as the missing link in their quest to become writers.

Adam: "The writing I did was very fun and easy. I wasn't being graded on the writing I did, so it took a lot of pressure off and let me be myself. It definitely improved my writing because I got critiqued by people who didn't know me. They were more honest with their appraisals because they didn't care what I thought of them."

Karen: "I very much enjoyed being able to 'converse' with someone in another country (Peru)—someone who, I soon discovered, wasn't all that different from me, although we had been raised in different countries. We didn't share the same point of view, however, and it was interesting, and sometimes infuriating, to hear what he had to say about, for example, the drug problem, life in the 'big city,' or school."

Chris: "BreadNet gave us a way to connect thoughts and feelings of people from all different walks of life. It also gave us a way to critique and be critiqued by other students who were (generally) unbiased. Students right here in the classroom know you and see you every day. They always have 'good stuff' to say about your writing. Someone who doesn't know you can be a lot more critical, if they want. It was an experience that I know I will remember in the future."

Autumn: "For the class I would have to say the most valuable BreadNet project was the reviewing of other students writing across the wires. In my first semester class we had a big 'scene' where some students were too crude and harsh in their review of some students out west. However, I think this episode taught the entire class some important stuff (especially since they were dealing with younger students than themselves). There is a difference between being critical and painfully obnoxious. Personally, I found writing to other kids in other countries (Americans in Peru was a new view definitely) a great way of finding out what's going on in other places that you normally feel cut off from (magazines and newspapers are impersonal)."

Shari: "I'm sure I learned a lot about being able to write tactfully. Between writing to a student from a different country (who sometimes had rather strong statements to make about his views of our country) and critiquing the work of some seventh graders of delicate temperament, I sometimes had to tread a thin line between what I really wanted to say and what was tolerable to the person at the other end of the modem. Still, the editing work was very helpful in improving my own writing."

Is any price too high to pay that yields student responses such as these? BreadNet is cost effective because it works better than any textbook, lesson plan or canned approach. The dividends are priceless: students who learn how to write and how to respond to writing. BreadNet's Workshop brings students a new understanding of the writing process, especially of revision. World Class brought the rainforest problem out of the vague territory of "global problems," out of the slick pages of the National Geographic, out of the lifeless pages of the history textbooks, smack into the middle of the classroom. The issue came to life in words flying across a large-screen monitor—words screaming out in as many voices as there were participants.

In an editorial in *Compute!* magazine, Geoff Keizer notes, "Telecommunications is, without a doubt, the most difficult, the most frustrating, the most delicate of personal computer applications. Telecommunications is composed of too many parts, any one of which can go bad and turn on you. Telecommunications is the space shuttle of computing."

If telecommunications is the space shuttle of computing, BreadNet is the Mercedes of space shuttles and BreadNetters are the well-trained pilots who know ho to get there and back again. We are wired for words, words that have helped to shrink the globe and transform us from writers into writers with a purpose.

Publications:

Holvig, Kenneth C. "Jamming the Phone Lines: Pencils, Notebooks and Modems." *English Journal*, December, 1989, p. 68-70. An overview of BreadNet conferences and ideas about setting up an exchange.

Solomon, Gwen. "A Writing Class Taps Into a World of Knowledge." *Electronic Learning*, March, 1989, p. 16-17. This piece focuses on our exchange with Colegio Roosevelt High School in Lima, Peru.

First place winner, A+ magazine contest, "How I Use the Apple IIe to Teach." Winning article, about BreadNet, published in "The Apple Idea Book."

Discovering the Community

by Den Latham
Tamassee-Salem High School
Salem, South Carolina

Since I studied at Bread Loaf, I don't have the "Me/Them" nightmares any more: me in front of rows of them, cramming grammar and threatening discipline. Later during my school's Bread Loaf projects, I might lie awake planning; but those were hours I dreamed with my eyes open, thinking of ways to capitalize on my students' interests and talents, and imagining ways of connecting students with community resources and experts.

It sounds sentimental to say that Dixie Goswami, Ike Coleman, Paul Cubeta, Jim Maddox, and Bread Loaf changed my life, but nothing less happened. I would not have lasted another year in the profession without them. What is more important, of course, is the effect they have had on students' lives.

My project school, Tamassee-Salem High, is a rural public school in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The student body consists of about 350 children, grades six through twelve. About 20% of the school population comes from the Daughters of the American Revolution children's home, a boarding facility for neglected and abused children. TSH is a sort of county stepchild: It often receives the district's hand-me-downs in terms of funding and resources.

With a series of three grants ($5,000 per year) and the encouragement of Sam Bass, the principal who had faith in our innovations, my students, myself, my school, and my community became experts in demolition and construction--we knocked down walls and built bridges. We destroyed some of the barriers which separate teachers from students, administrations from teachers, schools from communitites, and students from learning.

Year One

The first year, my ninth grade remedial, general, and college prep students voted to write and produce *The Legend of Jocassee* , a drama based on a local legend about the Cherokees. To help with the writing workshop, we hired a professional playwright; to understand the Native American culture, we invited Cherokee artists and neighborhood artisans to teach us how to make pottery, blowguns, bows and arrows, and other aboriginal crafts. Following Ken Macrorie's lead, my students wrote I-search papers, telling the stories and explaining the ways of their craft.

This year was also the first time that I saw my students meaningfully engaged with literature. My junior remedial students telecommunicated with Lucy Wollin's inner-city Mannhattan school, Park West High. We exchanged a series of letters and reading responses to Camus' *The Stranger*. Later, this New York-South Carolina connection turned into a written cultural exchange, where students described the people and places in their environment.

The first year of our grant changed my teaching. It convinced me that writing skills are best taught not through drill, but through projects that are meaningful to students' lives. It also showed me that when students help to plan what goes on in the classroom, they work with incredible energy and commitment. In fact, the volume of the students' writing forced me to seek more community support: If our projects were to grow, and if I intended to survive the workload, I would need help to deal with the quantity of text the students produced. The grant, therefore, had an unexpected benefit: The community and I got to know each other, and I developed positive working relationships with several parents.

Year Two

Our second year, students voted to publish a magazine of community-based research. I was happy to see this take place, since rural students often deprecate their small town and country surroundings. We took our starting point from Ken Macrorie's *The I-Search Paper* and Eliot Wigginton's *Foxfire*. My students discovered their local history, landmarks, crafts, business, wildlife, and politics. They became published authors and teenage experts on their topics. Also, I gained a deeper knowledge of my students, their families, and the community--and I earned their respect, not a small blessing for a public school teacher. With the loan of $1,000 from a community member (later repaid), we published several hundred copies. The community bought them up, read them, and appreciated the research and writing that students could generate.

We also began a cross-age reading program, under Elspeth Stuckey's guidance. Twice a week for several months, my remedial readers joined with those of the middle school to read short stories; they wrote letters to outside adults (Ike Coleman, Elspeth Stuckey, and community members) about the progress and frustrations of their tutoring. Although the daily logistics for this project were difficult, the program paid off. After having been condemned to remedial reading courses for several years, nearly 50% of my students moved into general classes. Standardized test scores were also impressive: Middle schoolers who took part in the program scored substantially better than those who didn't. Much of the credit goes to my team teacher and ally, Joan Tunstall, and to student Tracy Loggins.

I was again impressed by the ability of these allegedly undisciplined and unmotivated students to plan for their own learning and to solve problems in class management and methodology--a fact, by the way, which refutes the dogma that only teachers should make decisions about learning.

Year Three

First, telecommunications: Building on my rural students desire to explore other worlds and share their own, we initiated and monitored World Trade, an international electronic mail exchange of descriptive essays. We wrote about the uniqueness of the people and places in our corner of upstate South

Carolina, about our farms, lakes, hollows, and characters. In return, we discovered the world, receiving responses and essays from teenagers in Peru, New York, North Carolina, New Mexico, Montana, and Pennsylvania--accounts of terrorists, big city life, Mexican festivals, and cattle ranches. My creative writing class took part in Workshop, a similar exchange of fiction, drama, and poetry.

The cross-age tutoring program metamorphosed into a community activity headed by Joan Tunstall: Adults of our town's Lion's Club read novels with our remedial readers.

This was the final year of our grant--the year when our publication of *Oconee* broadened to become a school-wide, community, and even interstate effort. My writers commissioned drawings from Jewel Hutcherson's middle school art class. Community members helped with work processing. Other teachers, parents, community members, and Ann Young's remedial reading class at Seneca High School helped my students edit their articles. David Ingmundson's high school class in Bethel, Maine, designed our layout; and a local print shop assisted. Out of eighty students, seventy-nine published articles.

We experimented with writing. Some students published pro and con articles; some took on controversial issues, just as Joe Nichols had done the previous year with his article on a local power company's pump back stations. Others bridged the gap between genres, fictionalizing personal narratives and confidential interviews. Even now, as I hold a copy of *Oconee* and feel the weight of 150 pages of published and readable student writing, I am impressed. This is what takes place when we mix a few good ideas, a little money, and a lot of good people.

I teach at a new school now, a residential school for high schoolers gifted in science and math. My students' research still focuses on primary sources: They conduct telephone interviews with experts as far away as Middlebury, Harvard, and Berkeley on topics such as ecology, cryonics, and human rights. We hope to publish their writings in student newspapers, magazines, and literary anthologies.

Looking Backward and Forward

I look back with both satisfaction and frustration. *Oconee* lived for two issues, and the Bread Loaf years have been the heyday of my career. Then I succumbed to the offer of a livable salary and the chance to escape the state's restrictive basic skills program.

We had a lasting impact on my students' lives, and I should dwell on that. But unfortunately, I am pursued by the feeling that we did not have a lasting effect on education in my school or county. In spite of the community's support and all my students' good works, our district never seemed conscious of the worth and difficulty of what we were doing. I often felt we were bumping our heads against the ceiling. After the grants ended, education went back to business as usual.

If we are to change education in South Carolina, and maybe the United States, we must continue to affect the teachers and students in the classroom. But we must also campaign at the district and state level--let superintendents, school boards, and congressmen see the sense in how we work and get them to reallocate money and resources to empower students and teachers.

The Russian Adventure

by Laura Lewis
Brattleboro Union High School
Brattleboro, Vermont

In February 1988 Brattleboro Union High School sent forty-one students and four teachers to the Soviet Union for two weeks. When we announced our plans, reactions were varied: "You're going where?" "When?" "With *how many* kids?" "Are you crazy?" "Why?"

Fortunately, not everyone had the same reaction; and many told us they thought our trip was a fantastic opportunity and wished they could go with us. Predictably, Bread Loaf fell into the latter category. Program in Writing Coordinator Dixie Goswami thought the trip offered an opportunity to study the different kinds of writing which could be involved in organizing and experiencing a student-oriented trip: How could the trip be used to encourage different kinds of writing; how could writing add to the trip? Director Paul Cubeta concurred; and thanks to Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity, we were given a grant which helped us focus our intentions and provided text books, guest lecturers, and help in funding our translator/facilitator.

The first writing opportunity students encountered was that of the application to join the trip. B.U.H.S. considers study trips a privilege to be earned, and seriousness of purpose is a prerequisite from the outset. All students who wished to be a part of "The Russian Adventure" wrote an essay articulating their reasons for wanting to go. Most of the students wrote of a desire to see first hand this country which is so important in their lives and about which they hear so many terrible things. Meeghan McCaffrey put it this way:

> When I think of Russia, I picture a bunch of government guys with brown furry hats and fat ugly wives. These guys have a lot of missiles; they like to scare people; they like to invade small countries, and they like to be sneaky so no one knows what they're doing. I know zero about Russia, and yet my conceptions of the country are terrible. The fact that our country has created this awful image makes me want to go and to see the country and find out the truth about the normal people, the ones who don't buy submarines with their allowances.

Students developed a like/hate relationship with their textbooks and pre-trip journals, which we required. Because the trip was not part of a regularly scheduled class, students had to keep up with the assignments for our weekly evening "Russian Adventure" classes in addition to their other work, which in many cases was considerable. However, in early December when CBS Evening News came to town to film a feature story on Brattleboro's reaction to the signing of the ICBM treaty, they asked if they could film one of our classes. Now the information on Russian history which had seemed so remote was actually going to come in handy.

Students rediscovered that having to speak intelligently in public on the moment, organizing thoughts as well as preparing to articulate them, was a useful first step in the writing process. This particular pay-off was a little more dramatic than we can usually provide in the classroom; for the class made it to the final editorial cut and they were able to see how they had done on network news, December 8, 1987, at 7:00 PM. Since that night members of our group have spoken about the trip on several regional television programs, and they feel we have become better able to say what we want to say the way we want to say it while ignoring the lights and cameras than we were on that first program; in fact we now enjoy it.

Pre-trip journals were a new technique for us, and they occasioned mixed success. Students felt that there were weeks when they didn't have much to say even with the "prime the pump" questions the leaders provided. We were frustrated because we really wanted answers to our questions; and because we felt that preparation journals were important, were real, were personal, and ought to elicit writing. So why weren't they? My journal at this time is full of discouraging thoughts about this.

We have still to come up with a definitive answer; maybe the time requirement was the straw that broke the camel's back for these students who were also working one, two, and in a few cases three jobs to pay for the trip. Students now say that they quite like the journals as a sort of scrap book in which to save handouts in and jot down lists, but they did not like the feeling that they were being asked to come up with a piece of written work every week. I have a feeling that the lack of success had something to do with our presentation of the activity.

Perhaps as a result of the student's appearance on television, a letter by a Mr. Frank Cutler, a Vermonter who did not approve of our trip, appeared on the December 26 editorial page of the *Brattleboro Reformer* Mr. Cutler, in part, said that the students were "Being used as pawns in the leftist political endeavors of the adults managing these programs..." and suggested that we visit Fort Ticonderoga instead. Three of our students, Kevin Walker, Marielle Abell, and Amy Cooper answered him. Marielle and Amy wrote a joint letter and, in part, this is what they said:

> We are two of forty students from Brattleboro Union School who will be traveling to the Soviet Union in February. In response to Frank Cutler's letter in the December 26 issue, we would like to express our thoughts on the topic that Mr. Cutler addressed.
>
> The Russian Adventure, as we call it, is an opportunity for local students to experience first-hand the culture we have been taught to fear. Mr. Cutler has no trouble accusing the Soviets of brainwashing, yet his own attitude sports a brainwashed quality.
>
> The propaganda war has created such distorted views on both sides that visiting "our sworn enemy," as Mr. Cutler calls it, might seem

> unthinkable to some individuals. We feel that the rhetoric Mr. Cutler voices is what has sent us searching for the truth. We are confident that this trip will be one of the greatest learning experiences ever. It is too bad that Mr. Cutler's narrow view allows him to see these trips and exchanges only as negative expenditure. We happen to be very concerned about our future. Any action taken to promote better U.S./Soviet relations is a step toward a healthier future.

Mr. Cutler fired back in very small part.

> Marielle, Amy, and Kevin, I'm willing to bet the majority of parents in Brattleboro are glad they aren't your parents. If they were, I'm sure they would have seen to it that your education would have been better than what you have demonstrated in your letters to the *Reformer*.

Now if there is one thing you need to be careful about in Brattleboro, it is being negative in any way about Brattleboro children. Other students who were going on the trip wrote, students who were not going on the trip wrote, parents wrote, and citizens who had nothing to do with the trip wrote. Our trip had become a catalyst for a community writing project, a perfect example of Ken Macrorie's belief that if writers have something to write about that they care about, you won't be able to stop them. We didn't want to stop them.

Valentine's Day finally came and we pulled out of the B.U.H.S. parking lot at noon surrounded by well-wishers and the local television cameras. The pace began to pick up.

It never let down. The next two weeks are an exciting blur of activity, new language, new expectations, new food to eat, and everything new to look at. What helped keep us organized? What provided us with the memory and thus the knowledge of what we did? Our journals, of course.

I have yet to read them all; but, not surprisingly, in those that I have, the entries which immediately take me back to a shared experience or make me say, "Yes, that's exactly how it was!" belong to writers who wrote in their journals *every day*. Even every other day does not work as well; you don't mean to, but you forget and once it's gone.... On a trip we took with students in London, we were working independently of a tour guide and it was easy to schedule writing time. In Russia, Intourist scheduled our time and, alas, it did not allow for journal writing except at night and generally, because of theatre events or student sociability, late at night. If George and I ever do this again, consistent daily writing time will be built into the schedule.

Some entries allow me to share an experience I missed and tell me how the writer felt about it. Keith Porter is on our local ice hockey team, and this perspective allowed him to notice and report the following:

> As I entered the department store through the only door, I noticed a small group of people gathered around a T.V. in the appliance

> department. As I got closer, I could see that it was several male Russians watching the largest T.V. there. It was an Olympic ice hockey game, the U.S.A. vs. the U.S.S.R.! I started to glow with excitement to be able to see such a game in this environment. I found a place to stand in the horse-shoe shaped crowd which surrounded the T.V. I stared at the game which was very fast paced and hard-hitting, and then at the Russian faces which were blank. No emotions, no expressions at all, just cold stares and folded arms. They looked as if they were forced to watch the game. They stood there like zombies, a U.S. goal, no reaction, a Soviet goal, no reaction. This went on until the end of the game. The Soviet team won, as usual; the people turned away, went home or to another part of the store. I returned to the hotel in complete amazement.

In the United States we are not required to use the cloak room at a group event very often, but as Brian Richardson discovered, in the Soviet Union...

> In the Soviet Union it is considered rude to take your coat into the performance with you. You would receive all sorts of sidewards glances or just outright insults. So you leave your coat at the counter of the cloakroom. The lady takes it and then gives you a ticket; the ticket is the key to getting your coat back safely or at all. After the performance the line of people up to the coat hangers is incredible. I have never in my life seen old ladies push and shove as they did then. It is an all out free-for-all. The ladies behind the counter are working as fast as possible. Another thing about your coat is that the *babushka*, the lady behind the counter, will get extremely angry if you don't have a loop (for hanging) in your coat. This causes all sorts of problems and doesn't make for good relations with the *babushka*..

Lisa Pearson, a particularly effective journalist, noticed everything and remembered what she thought and how she felt about the things she saw.

> Tuesday, February 16: It only took another hour or so (on the train) to get to Leningrad. I stood with my nose flat against the window for several minutes. It looked so "Russian." It was almost completely dark; it was snowing, and men with fur hats were on the streets. We got off the train."
>
> Thursday, February 18: Last night it snowed about an inch, and this morning there were people with shovels and brooms all over. About ten men were sweeping the steps very carefully in front of the Nine Hundred Day Seige Memorial. Later, I saw old women with ice picks walking down the sidewalks. Another thing that impressed me was the number of army/military vehicles on the streets. Every third car was green and military. I wonder how that affects their minds. In the

U.S. when I see military stuff, I feel weird. Maybe it is that we've never had war on our own 'turf'.

At ten in the morning, there were already long lines of people waiting to get into the stores.... After lunch, we drove to the Piskarevsky (Cemetery) Memorial to those who died in the 900 Day Seige. Elena (our Intourist guide) stood up and asked to speak to us of the seige. She spoke softly, and I was completely overcome with emotion. The Nazis were unable to take Leningrad by storm so they made a circle around the city and cut off all supplies. An average of 5,000 people died each day for 900 days. The rations consisted of bread mixed with sawdust. Elena was proud as she told how the people stuck it out, plugged to survive, kept going to school, and lived. The city was completely rebuilt in a short number of years. Four of the five summer palaces had been leveled, thirty five percent of the buildings leveled, everything was in ruins. We went through a short museum of pictures. Then we walked through the mass graves where speakers played classical music...

These people, any people who could have gone through something like this, *cannot* want war. Elena told us that we must understand their desire for peace. Whether every single person in the USSR shares the same opinion or not, I believe her. We have no idea what it is like. The soldiers in Vietnam were offensive. We have never been defensive since the Revolution (or our Civil War?)... What could it be like to have your home bombed? Elena could remember hearing shells drop like raindrops. I cannot even imagine. I have to think about it more--so many things are running through my mind.

Monday, February 22: On the Metro ride home, I met two deaf black marketeers. They wrote down everything. They asked where I was from. They were excited when I said USA. They wanted to trade for American fashions. I said nope. I was a bit disgusted. Why are they all on the black market? But they kept talking/writing. They were sweet and waved good-bye.

I looked at the people on the Metro. None of them would see New York City. Never see neon lights, trillions of different cars, traffic jams, advertisements... To them, life is something they have accepted, not something they enjoy. They seem to put up with everything. I got so depressed on the way from the Metro to the hotel. We had not realized how accustomed we so quickly became to the greyness of everything in the Soviet Union.

Saturday, February 27: It looked different coming back into Helsinki than it was leaving for Russia. The houses in Russia all look... 'used', sort of worn in and out.

> Man. What a culture shock. (In Finland) Unbelievable. So many colors. So many signs. So many cars. So many colors! Everything was colorful. The people wore bright coats. The buildings have colored letters. Everything is colorful.

Debbie Carrasquillo's entry for January 28, 1988 speaks for itself:

> We just boarded the plane. I have mixed feelings about leaving Europe. I miss my friends and family, yet I have met a new family (the RA group) of different people. I have talked to and gotten to know some very nice Russians. I don't understand how these people can be our 'enemies' when they are the same as us, they have the same hopes and dreams, fears and questions. I found that the younger generation understood our wishes of peace and friendship, yet the older people have already suffered through pain and grown their hate, while we are still open minded and naive. After going on this trip, I realize more than ever how important my future is and how everyone cares and how no one is evil and bad.
>
> I dread this seven hour flight; it's a strange way to end an exciting trip. I'm afraid that when I return to school my new family will break up and things will be the same. How can it be the same? I've grown and matured with this trip, and I know everyone else has also. I hope everyone understands my feelings. I believe they do because we have all experienced this adventure.
>
> When I return home, I want to call my old friends, yet I don't because that would make my trip officially over when I'm not ready for it to be. I have gotten new faith in my new country, Russia, and in my home country, USA. I don't believe that I'm anti-American to love the Soviet Union. It is quite the contrary. I don't think that anyone can love their country fully if they just follow beliefs. You must test beliefs and draw your own conclusions.
>
> March 2, 1988: Here I sit in the L.C. (the school learning center) looking at pictures of our trip. A lot of people asked me how it was, but it's so hard to explain. You must be there to understand how meaningful and memorable this country and trip are. It doesn't really feel like I've gone anywhere. I miss the Soviet Union so much. Everything seems so stupid now: gossip of my friends, schoolwork, and daily problems. I'm very happy to discover that I'm still friends with the "Russian Adventure" people. I'm having a great time looking over the pictures; it brings back a lot of feelings. I hope I always remember the feelings of the trip. I think I will.

On our last day in Helsinki, while some students were finishing last minute postcards and letters, another journey occurred in the form of writing. We called a meeting of students who enjoyed writing. We had been asked by our local paper, the *Brattleboro Reformer,* to submit, on our return, a series of articles about the trip. We needed to decide what we would say. Students volunteered and were nominated for this series and jointly decided to submit six articles, one each day for a week. As the paper did not want the articles without accompanying photographs, lead time would consist of the time it took to have film developed. The subjects would consist of a general introduction to the trip and the series and pieces on Intourist, the black market, a visit to a Russian school, an unscheduled visit to a new Russian friend's home, and a wrap-up piece on our impressions of Russia and her people.

I asked the students what part they felt writing had played in the trip. All thought, and Kevin Walker spoke for the group, "Writing made me start thinking seriously before I went. It developed what my ideas were. I knew what they were, but while I was writing, other ideas would come out of the writing. While there, writing kept things in my mind, the things I remember best now are the things I wrote down. Before you go, writing puts you in the mood to go; while there, writing helps you understand. Before, it prepares your mind to think about the trip; there, it helps you process it. Before, it helps keep your thoughts in one place as an organizational tool. After you return, it helps you compare what your thoughts and ideas were and what the realities actually were."

Why Russia? That question has haunted all of us from the beginning. I can think of no better way to finish this piece than to let Cara Medved respond to the question as she did in her lead article for our newspaper series:

> Why Russia? This question of many questions was first asked when a group of Brattleboro Union High School students, with the aid of Mr. and Mrs. George Lewis, first planned a two-week trip to the Soviet Union.
>
> From the start, our trip was widely publicized and drew criticism and support from all sides. We began an intense preparation period which consisted of weekly meetings, various guest speakers, and a monthly Russian meal prepared and eaten by the students. The idea that we were traveling to a country so widely discussed but rarely visited made these preparations essential.
>
> Each individual had different reasons for wanting to be part of the Russian Adventure. One reason common throughout the group was that we wanted to see Russia with our own eyes. We had been subject to so many stories and stereotypes that no one knew what to believe.
>
> Finally, on February 14, forty-one students and five chaperones departed from B.U.H.S. making our long awaited trip a reality.
>
> 2/16/88 - 5:01pm.
>
> We have been on the train for four hours out of a seven hour trip. Moments ago, the Soviet border patrol put us through customs

as we passed the border between Finland and the Soviet Union. Three Russian soldiers entered our six-person compartment and looked at our passports, visas, and felt through Kevin's luggage. The anxiety of this silent scrutiny finally got to me, and I began to giggle nervously. I noticed that not one of the soldiers even cracked a smile.

My journal entry does not begin to give an accurate account of the emotions that we dealt with as we anxiously entered the Soviet Union. As our trip progressed, I found that there were many accounts that were too difficult to write down on paper or capture in a photograph.

Even the most intense preparations could not ready us for the various culture shocks we were yet to encounter. In our first few days in Leningrad, not only did I feel as though I was in a different country, but also in a totally different world. We were faced with an entirely new language, and even more foreign to us, an entirely new alphabet..

Although we tried to blend in with the Soviet citizens, we stuck out sorely as typical American tourists. On our first tour of Leningrad, I remember our group of forty-one climbing off our Intourist bus and snapping photos of different Russian attractions like the Hermitage and the Winter Palace. Soviet passersby glanced over at us with their expressionless faces. We felt loud, intrusive, and uncomfortable.

Being American tourists, we were constantly accosted by Black Market traders whose few English phrases consisted of, "You American, you make trade?" Knowing we were not allowed to trade goods with them, we were firm, but sometimes got them to converse with us on topics other than their trading.

Soon the embarrassment of being a tourist wore off. We began to feel more comfortable as we adjusted to our surroundings. Lisa Pearson even got a whole group of soldiers to pose smiling as she took their picture.

We would walk downtown saying "hello" and smiling at people. Each time we received a positive response, we felt as though we were making some sort of progress in our goal of establishing pleasant relations with these people.

Our Intourist guide, Elena, who seemed so strict on our first night in Leningrad warmed up to our group in a matter of days. When we left for home at the end of our two week stay, our departure from Elena was a teary one as she declared us her "family."

While the various museums, cathedrals, and other Soviet attractions were fascinating and beautiful, our group yearned to experience those things that you couln't capture in a journal or a photograph. A small group of us were lucky enough to go with our facilitator, John Gould, to visit a Soviet family with whom he was acquainted. Although we had to keep this somewhat risky visit a secret for his friends' safety, it was a learning experience that you could not get from a book or museum.

We visited a Russian school in Moscow where we spoke to the students of an English class. We traded buttons, gum, and conversation. We talked about school, sports, music, politics, and world problems. We ended the visit by singing songs. It was one of the highlights of our trip. Not only did we learn more about the Soviet Union, but we also learned more about our own country. Even more importantly, perhaps, we learned more about ourselves. We discovered that our group was anything but a typical tourist group. We learned to punctual. We shared our newly experienced feelings. We tried the different and very foreign foods such as caviar and fish soup. Our group attempted to see the positive aspect of situations and took the opportunity to do and see everything we could.

One event that I remember particularly about our group occurred one evening after an interesting but long opera. We were walking back to our Intourist bus feeling very boisterous after sitting still for three hours. We threw snowballs, and sang various Beatles songs. We knew we stood out, but we weren't self-conscious. That evening we received a compliment from a Soviet citizen who said it was refreshing to see a group who was so happy and carefree. That night I felt confident about being an American tourist.

There are aspects of Russia I cannot describe. The distinctive smell of the Soviet Union which is a combination of body odor, cabbage, and other undefinable scents became familiar and almost pleasant.

When we traveled to Zagorsk, the Mother Monastery of Old Russia, and sat in on a church service, we found it hard to describe amongst ourselves the peaceful but eerie way we felt.

One night, on Red Army Day, which is a Soviet national holiday, we went to a performance at the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin. We listened to a soldiers' chorus and saw soldiers dance Russian folk dances. There was a strong sense of patriotism in the audience, and instead of feeling defensive, I felt understanding. It was a good feeling, and a great performance.

We were in Russia for only two weeks. There are a great many things that we still don't understand about Russia and its people; for a two-week introduction, it was one of the most thorough introductions we could have had.

Why Russia? You cannot answer that in one sentence. You have to see it for yourself. Then maybe you can understand why a short but enriching two weeks will remain unforgettable to forty-one students who were fortunate enough to experience Russia for themselves.

Epilogue: A Letter to Mr. Bingham

After I received Dixie Goswami's letter in early December asking for a final perspective on our Bread Loaf Writing Grant, I began to think about the grant and how it has affected those of us who worked with it and those in the school community who were not involved.

I thought about this year's November newspaper article, written with students, about an exhibit of Anne Frank memorabilia on loan to our school. Interested students helped hang the exhibit, wrote the study guide to the fifty panel collection, and served as tour guides for most of the elementary schools in the county.

I continued to think about it as another group of students brainstormed prompts for a writing group that meets Tuesdays after school. These are students who want to try out more and different kinds of writing than they have opportunity for in one English class.

I thought about how the act of writing and opportunities for writing have changed at our school as I worked with Students for Global Concerns. This group is planning a week-long series of environmental speakers, programs, and contests. They wrote letters to environmental organizations inviting them to be a part of an environmental fair, created posters for their recycling contest; we put together another newspaper article explaining the week and inviting the public to join us.

After school (except Tuesdays) the costume crew for this year's musical creates the costume book for *Oliver*. We include characters, measurements, ideas for fabric, color, style, swatches, prices, accessories: whatever we think of as ideas for costumes.

A small group of students is reading Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. I think we would be lost without our journals in this layered, dense treasure. We use them to find our way through the meaning, to accumulate clues to all sorts of things, to isolate what Morrison has to say about life under slavery, about the effect that life had on those who endured it, about the ways they coped. And who knows what else? We haven't finished it yet. I am afraid if we didn't work on our journals seperately and then come together, we wouldn't remember everything we found and thought, or one of us would take over and we would lose everyone else's ideas. As it is we are having a glorious time trying to understand it together.

I even thought of the grant in Alabama at Christmas. My fourth grade niece and I joined our church choir singing Christmas carols at the county jail one night--and then put the experience in our illustrated holiday journals.

And I think that's the point. What Mr. Bingham's trust grant did most for me and for our school's writing is to make us aware of writing. We notice the writing we do in connection with all sorts of activities, we are interested to see how experience will translate into writing and what sort it will turn out to be, we like to experiment with writing.

Our grant provided funding to explore travel as a vehicle for writing, in particular travel to the Soviet Union. We received $1500 and, together with my

$500 honorarium, this provided text books, speakers, publication expenses, and partial funding for our trip facilitator. We sought our grant for the sense of purpose and importance it gave our project. If somebody believed in us and our ability to capture our adventure on paper for others to enjoy enough to help pay for it... well, it made us believe in ourselves and our work more than we had previously. It focused our observations and sharpened our sense of trying to see people and places and experiences in terms of writing and stories to share. It made us conscientious about recording our adventures promptly, accurately, and completely. When we returned, it became the taskmaster that kept us writing and rewriting all through the long, wet spring and incredibly hot summer so that we would have our contracted book ready to send to Bread Loaf while it was still in session. And we did.

What advice would we give anyone contemplating a funded writing project? That's easy. First, work and rework your prospectus until it covers exactly everything you hope to do. Second, be sure that you understand completely and in writing exactly everything you will be expected to do under the terms of your grant. Last, be prepared to change as new and more interesting things come up that you hadn't considered.

Was it cost effective? Well, if we had been working for a publishing company, I think they would would have considered it cost effective if they received six newspaper articles and a full length error free manuscript, as good as any and better than most on its subject, with accompanying photographs, for a $1500 advance. As educators, we are happy that several of our writers have gone on to major in English/writing, two in Russian/Slavic studies, and one to enlist in the Air Force language program hoping to specialize in Russian and other Slavic languages.

I hope Mr. Bingham (and I have a mental picture of him that is rather like a Daddy Warbucks for young writers) will decide to continue his funding. There are an awful lot of teachers and students in this country who have exciting things to say but might need a little help in learning how to say them.

Thank you again, Mr. Bingham and Bread Loaf, for helping us.

From Writing to Scripting

by Nancy Linvill
Edwards Junior High School
Central, South Carolina

This school year I embarked on a new adventure. I am using Macintosh computers to teach a HyperCard multi-media computer class. I began this class not knowing much more about HyperCard than the students taking the course. A friend visiting my classroom remarked, "You were either very foolish or very brave to teach a technical subject you knew little about."

I think I was neither foolish nor brave to teach the HyperCard class. But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me tell you about how I came to realize that all that new equipment sitting in my classroom could be used effectively by even the most reluctant teacher--me.

South Carolina Rural Writing Network

Five years ago I was given the opportunity to participate in a Bread Loaf project. I was teaching English to learning disabled seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students at Edwards Junior High in Central, South Carolina. My students' problems ranged from not being able to organize thoughts into more than one paragraph, through writing run-on sentences, to leaving the endings off verbs. Their handwriting was difficult to read, so they often preferred to print rather than use cursive writing.

I felt apprehensive about beginning the program. I was a bit intimidated by the other teachers who had magnificent Bread Loaf writing projects. I was afraid that my Bread Loaf grant project would not be successful because my past experiences teaching writing had been a frustrating exercise for both my students and myself. When I assigned topics, students would glare and complain about not having any ideas to write about. After they finished, usually a short one-paragraph paper, I would carefully go over their paper with red ink correcting errors and making suggestions for improvements. They would grumble as they wrote their final copy, making the whole process unpleasant for both students and teacher. The classroom was directed by the teacher and there was little opportunity for students to make decisions about their own learning experience.

From Ike Coleman, Director of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, and Dixie Goswami, Clemson University English professor and Director of Bread Loaf's Program in Writing, I heard about a different approach to teaching writing. They suggested allowing students to select their own topics, share their writing with an audience, and publish students' writing. Since past teaching efforts had been less than a total success, I decided to give this method a try.

After a discussion with my students, we decided to publish individual books of their writings at the end of the school year. Picking subjects to write about was a fairly easy task. We wrote long lists on the chalkboard from which students selected topics that appealed to them. In order to gather information, the students said that they would enjoy having someone talk about their chosen subjects. They said that they would be willing to write about each speaker's visit.

During the year, we listened to guests that included football players, a race car driver, a fisherman and a cheerleader. The students enjoyed the presentations and their attitude toward writing improved. They put a great deal of thought and effort into each of their stories. I had them take notes and organize their thoughts before they wrote. This helped them to arrange their writing into multiple paragraphs.

Ike Coleman encouraged me to find volunteers to come into my classroom. They worked with individual students helping them read aloud and find mistakes in their story. They also stimulated students to add details in their story by asking questions about missing information. This approach helped students find spelling and grammar errors and made it easier for readers to understand the message.

Each student published a book of writings at the end of the school year. They then took their books to a first grade classroom and read their stories to the children. They also shared extra copies of their book with important people in their lives. As I compared their stories from the beginning and end of the school year, I realized that they had made major advances in their writing.

Writing Improvements with Computers

When the Bread Loaf Project began, there were three computers in my classroom. This meant that students could sometimes use a word processor to type their papers. When students were given the chance to use the computer, I observed that stories suddenly were longer, with more details, and that they had corrected many of their mistakes. They thought the final typed copy that zipped off the printer was beautiful and begged to do all of their papers on the computer.

Seeing how computers improved these resource students' writing, I wanted to have enough machines so that every student would be able to do his or her writing using a word processor. I applied to a nearby corporation for a grant and was awarded $16,000 worth of computer equipment and software for my students' use.

The students and I learned to use the new computers and word processing software together. We found the new computers to be more sophisticated than equipment we had used in the past. The students, however, were not afraid to experiment with buttons and were soon teaching me to use the new computers. They enjoyed the unique experience of teaching their teacher.

I continued to work with some of my students for a second year in the Bread Loaf Project. I noticed that they were becoming more assured of their writing ability, which in turn carried over to a better self image. In the first year, we had written about visiting speakers because my students did not have the self-confidence to write about themselves. In this second year they began to think of topics from their own experience that they wanted to share in writing with others.

As the school year progressed I realized that computers were enabling the students to make giant strides in their writing ability. They no longer laboriously produced hand-written rough drafts that were hard to read. Words and thoughts could be added and rearranged so easily. Writing was readable. Using the computer, their writing skills truly began to blossom.

A telephone line and modem connected our computers to the Clemson University Forestry and Agriculture Network and BreadNet. This allowed students in my classroom to send writing to students in schools who were also connected to computer networks. As my students sent their writing to other places, they began to think about making their thoughts understood by an audience in another school.

South Carolina administers a basic skills test to all eighth graders in the state. On the writing section, students are given an unlimited amount of time to write in response to a given prompt. This test is very similar to the high school exit exam students take as a graduation requirement. Since most of our classroom writing was being done on computers, I thought that my students should be allowed to take the writing section of their basic skills test using a word processor.

When I called the state Department of Education asking permission for my class to use computers for the exam, I was first told that it was impossible. Two days before the test, I received a call informing me that because my students were in a resource classroom and because each had an individual education program, they would be able to use computers for the writing section of the basic skills test.

My students worked diligently for this test. They spent at least thirty minutes on preparing to write by taking notes and arranging them in logical order. When they sat down at the computer to write, they kept a dictionary on their laps to correct spelling errors.

I impatiently waited for the writing scores to be returned. I made several calls to the district office during the summer asking if the scores had arrived. Finally in July, I was told that they had been delivered and that I could come and see my students' test results.

When I found my students' names on the list, I was shocked to see that there were no writing scores by their names. I immediately called the State Department of Education to find out why the scores were missing. Several telephone calls were exchanged during the next few months. No one seemed to know what had happened to the scores.

At the end of September I finally saw a letter that said my students' writing tests had been accidentally discarded and a replacement test could not be given. I was told that if I found the disk copies, they would score those. I searched through all of my computer disks several times and found four of six files on disks. These four were graded. Two students passed the writing section of the basic skills test for the first time in their lives.

The loss of these important test papers was a frustrating and upsetting experience for both my students and me. The test was the culmination of a long project for us. It was the first time that my students thought that they could be successful writers.

Ever since I became part of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, I have asked my students about their interests and invited speakers to my classroom to talk about these subjects. I have my students take notes and organize them before they begin to write. All students who wish to do so type their stories using a computer word processor. After completing their writing, they send the completed story to pen pals in other schools. At the end of the school year, we put together and publish a book.

Cutting Edge Technology--Computer Multimedia

In 1990 1 received a $90,000 Target 2000 Grant from the South Carolina State Department of Education. This grant provided Macintosh computers and HyperCard so that students could develop interactive multimedia computer presentations and lessons for other classes in the school.

HyperCard is a software program that is supplied with Macintosh Computers. A card contains information that is seen on the computer screen. A button is used to control the display or to perform other computer operations. A HyperCard stack is a group of cards connected by scripted buttons. Pictures scanned into the computer, pictures taken from videotape or videodisks, recorded sounds, and written information may be put onto a card. A series of cards can be used to create animation. An entire classroom can view the computer screen at one time when output is goes into an overhead projector.

We started a special class in which students use this technology to prepare curriculum materials for their other classes. The students work with subject-area teachers to decide what information to present and how it will be displayed in HyperCard. Completed stacks are demonstrated by the students to their fellow students. While students learn about HyperCard, they are gaining knowledge about other subject areas. They develop writing and speaking skills as they present lessons to a class.

Learning in this classroom is marked by experimentation and research. Students are encouraged to share discoveries and ask others for information. The teacher acts as a consultant as the students decide on topics, produce a product and share that product with others.

One student said, "HyperCard is a good way of learning, and is an easy way to present something without all the hassle. It makes you feel that you are a business person working for your boss to try and make a presentation for him at the big meeting."

Summary and Conclusions

I do not have a technical mind, and I do not love working with machines. I hate to read manuals, feel flustered when I cannot make the computer operate correctly and have as much computer phobia as anyone. In spite of this, I have incorporated computers into my classroom because I have seen them turn students on to learning.

Operational problems have occurred many times on computers in my classroom, but students almost never complained about using them to write stories. They enjoyed using computers so much that they wanted to do more writing than time allowed in class and they were willing to stay after school to do extra work. One student had this to say about writing on computers, "I think it is fun to write on the computers because it is fast. The other reason is you can see your mistakes easier. The computers can also help you to be a better writer."

When I examine the writing of my students since I began the Bread Loaf project, I am amazed at their progress. It truly makes a difference when students write about their own interests, write for an audience, and use a computer word processor. When I began this project, I never could have imagined the positive changes that would occur in my classroom.

Working with HyperCard's cutting-edge technology has been a marvelous opportunity for my students and me to explore new, uncharted areas. My experience working with the South Carolina Rural Writing Network grant has given me confidence to go into a teaching situation where I do not have all the answers.

I feel blessed for having had this Bread Loaf experience. It has been a privilege to know Dixie Goswami and Ike Coleman. They have given me the confidence to try new things as I teach. I have also learned much from meeting master teachers such as JoAnn Wigington and Den Latham. My Bread Loaf grant project was a wonderful opportunity which will continue to influence my classroom as long as I teach.

Publication Workshop

by Francis Lyons, Terrance Holmes and Grayson Hartley
Morse High School
Bath, Maine

The publications workshop at Morse High School is a one-semester course open to juniors and seniors for elective credit. The goal is to produce a community-based magazine, *Kaleidoscope.* The class, which meets for one period daily, is team-taught. The program's educational objective is to involve students in as many steps of the publishing process as possible. Students receive intensive instruction in interviewing and writing skills and complementary, less intensive instruction in photography, graphic design, and darkroom work.

Enrollment has ranged from fifteen to twenty-one. The workshop convenes in one classroom, but with the cooperation of administration and faculty also uses computers in the vocational center's business department and the Morse writing room, as well as the school's darkroom.

In addition to funding from the regular school budget, the workshop has relied on public and private grants, bringing over $40,000 into Union #47 in the seven years of its existence. Activities of the workshop have also led to the creation of Getting Into Print, an outreach program aimed at helping teachers and students in earlier grades gain expertise and real experience in the publishing process.

Commendations

1. The unique nature and success of the Publication Workshop.

2. The outstanding reputation of Publication Workshop as evidenced by comments of renowned textbook author Ken Macrorie.

3. The students of Publication Workshop who were asked to serve as consultants to other school publishing programs.

4. The wide variety of skills taught to students of all academic backgrounds.

5. The staff for writing grants which has brought in over $40,000 in the last seven years of Publication Workshop's existence.

Recommendations

1. Develop a capital plan with the goal of providing each student with a workstation, with capabilities for both word processing and page design.

2. Develop a graphic arts program in conjunction with vocational school.

Staging Change

by Cindy Myers
Mynderse Academy
Seneca Falls, New York

In the first class I taught in Seneca Falls, I asked a group of eighth graders to write a letter to me about themselves. In my notes I wrote, "They looked at me blankly, so I asked them what they could write about. No one raised a hand. I called on three of them--no ideas. Then I called on another, and one of the first ones I called on raised his hand. Once he gave an answer, others had ideas, too. Still, they had trouble beginning--three didn't write anything for almost ten minutes. Then they wrote one sentence each. Another wrote a sentence but seemed to have trouble continuing. So did another who wrote a sentence and sat looking around. He signed the sentence at the end of ten minutes and handed it in."

A few days later, I had written, "Most took their free writing and used that as their papers--no other draft done (other than the final draft), not much revising or editing--almost none." The upper-level students also wrote sketchy papers, with final drafts that were almost exact copies of first drafts.

They came to my class from grammar drills, vocabulary workbooks, a few pieces of writing, some assigned stories and books, and with the overwhelming attitude that writing and reading were "boring." They left for more of the same. As one high school teacher told me, they "needed" grammar instruction in grades six through nine in order to write in grade ten and beyond.

That March, after I'd dropped my struggle with the curriculum to move fully into writing and reading workshop, after excitement grew in many students as they showed more ease with putting words on paper, an anonymous group story contributed to by some of the brightest students in eighth grade said: "We don't have a real English class. All we do is read and write," followed by a comment that they weren't going to know how to speak or write correctly--a skewed picture of literacy they believed in.

That was 1985. Six years later we're not the same.

As I read my notes now from the year before the Bread Loaf in the Schools Project began, I sense an intensity building, a pull between those frustrations and moving ahead. I read of signs that my eighth graders, the second year, were becoming engaged in writing and reading. I read encounters with teachers, this time not solely questioning my teaching but tentatively wanting to know what I do, how I teach--of the seventh grade teacher venturing into process writing and reading after years of following a traditional junior high English curriculum, of the sixth grade teacher meeting with us in January at the principal's urging to find out what we were doing, of a senior high English teacher stopping me in the hall to ask, "What program do you use for reading and writing?" after the reading teacher told her that if everyone taught the way I did, the education problems in this country would change drastically, a query leading eventually to our keeping a dialogue journal and to her taking on a leadership role beyond the project as she has come to understand how students learn and teachers change.

We had a stage set for change, a stage whose curtain was opened wide when the letter arrived inviting me to submit a proposal for a Bread Loaf in the Schools project. In our town of 7500 in rural Upstate New York, the project focused and quickened a slow, but growing, change in teachers and students--one teacher at a time affecting a group of students or a whole grade level, and through his or her enthusiasm drawing in other teachers. Change has fed upon change. The project took us one step at a time, looking at where we were and reaching out toward where we could be.

We moved from a first-year project goal of insuring all students writing workshop in grades six through eight to expanding in both directions, involving five teachers from grades three, four, five, and ten the second year and seven more teachers from grades two, three, five, and six the third year. In three years, the project teachers affected about 860 students in a district with about 1550 students total, many of them receiving two or three years of writing instruction in a row.

My students are different now. On the first writing day in September 1990, three students in one class said to me individually, "Can we write now?" before we'd begun. My students surprise me with the ease with which they write. We begin the year at a point my former students had been after half a year or more in eighth grade. Only a few students have trouble putting words on paper. More become deeply involved with their writing, learning to take the reader's point of view, listening for smoothness and clarity, relying more on revisions to make a paper good than on writing a great first draft.

For me, our project has been a study of how such change happens in a school. My questions have been: How do I effect change in a staff? How do I help teachers change the environment they put their students into? And how do we create a literate environment for our students throughout a whole district?

I began with myself, my students, and a vision of what my classroom could be. Since no one else taught the way I did my first year in Seneca Falls, I had to rely on my classroom research to help me see what was happening and what to do. Not only did that help me put into perspective what was happening, it also showed changes in the students' attitudes and habits that surfaced only as the year drew to a close. Students who thought writing was "boring" in September, wrote that it was "fun" by June or showed more maturity in their views of it: "Writing is a time when you can express your feelings." "Writing is something that you should take your time with and be proud of because whatever you write is your own." "I wasn't a writer until I started the eighth grade, and now I like it."

Sharing my students' words and progress led the seventh grade teacher to join me in changing our classrooms. Gradually, my vision widened. What could we do if more teachers were involved? I had a principal who knew how to nurture change in teachers. Not only did he not stand in our way, he encouraged us, nudged other teachers in our direction, and asked me to teach him about the background and methods of my teaching so that he could explain to others what we were doing.

When the project grant was awarded, we had both the means and the authority needed to make change happen more quickly. Most of the money paid for teacher and student stipends--for the time they put into the project. Some also paid for student publications, books we used as resources, and the costs of being connected with BreadNet, another support that helped me carry out the project.

The authority given us through having a name for the project and financial backing led to other needed support. The school board approved in-service credit for teachers in the second and third years, especially important for us because having so many teachers involved left little money for adequate stipends. This was a big commitment from the school board since the amount of credit given came closer to moving teachers to the next column on the pay scale.

In May 1987 I showed a group of third through fifth grade teachers the progress of one student during eighth grade (with his permission)--notes from the conferences I had with him, samples of his writing, comments he'd made in class and on surveys, and my observations of how he worked. I used his words to show other teachers what is possible, what can happen when a student is given the right support and environment, and what could have kept his progress from happening. This was the turning point in two meetings filled with questions about standardized tests and doubts about changing to a new way of teaching writing.

More teachers joined after I sent out an information sheet beginning with comments from second year project teachers and after we published articles those teachers had written from classroom research they carried out during the project. I've learned that showing teachers how to teach writing well requires showing them how to pay attention to their students' words, how to listen to and watch their students and to consider those observatons in developing their teaching.

Through my classroom research, my students have taught me how to teach writing and reading well. They helped teach all of us through their involvement in the project. During the first year, more than forty eighth graders met with me in revolving groups to talk about our classroom, how they wrote, what they noticed in the younger students they observed, and what they thought would help all students write better. In the second year, smaller groups of eighth and ninth graders stayed involved throughout most of the year, helping to publish students' writing, acting as research assistants through visiting the classrooms of the other project teachers, and again offering their insights into how students learn to write. A small group of students from the second year continued to work on the project during the third year, and a small group is helping now to focus follow-up work.

I find myself no longer isolated in my classroom but faced with challenges. For a year and a half after the project ended, I relaxed from the extra work of reaching out, looked within, and now look ahead.

What should come now? I see a need for us to question ourselves, as a district, as to whether we're creating a literate environment for students throughout their school years, and to develop more means for working toward that. We have problems to deal with. Sometimes my students tell me now they're worn out from writing, that they're out of ideas. We talk about what they might do, and they work on different forms of writing. But I think those complaints are also a sign that something is lacking. We've had great difficulty developing ongoing student publications. Without an audience, writing paper after paper can seem senseless. Although we produced some publications through the grant, we don't have the time it takes to keep all of those going much less to increase the number of publications. And we do need extra funding for publications. But if we don't work out this problem, the motivation to write is going to decrease, and we're not going to help our students reach their potential as writers.

Besides that problem, writing isn't being taught effectively in every classroom yet, nor is reading, and only in isolated cases are teachers having students use writing to help them learn in any of the content areas. I see the possibility for involving students, parents, teachers, and administrators in conducting a study of literacy in our district. We need to gather information from each other, analyze it, and write about where we stand and what we still need, what helps students learn to write and read better, the problems teachers face in changing their classrooms and the supports that would help them. This study, especially if it involves everyone in gathering information, would help us focus on literacy as an issue. I see also potential in teachers who have been reaching out to other teachers--teachers who also see a vision for our schools. If we had financial support, I can see us working in a group to continue what has begun, to develop the areas where we're still lacking--using our knowledge of student writers and readers and of literacy learning to promote whatever would help us grow.

I've also held in my mind since the second year of the project that we have to find a way to make the students' voices heard. Many times the students who have worked on the project told me what gets in the way of their learning. My own students regularly help me see and change what's happening in my classroom especially through the writing they do in learning logs. If teachers would observe their students closely and ask them to comment regularly and seriously on the work they're doing for class, there wouldn't be a need for new directives from above. The students would lead us in changing. I know many teachers don't believe this. They see themselves as the central authority and the students as not knowing much, as complainers--not serious enought to be helpful. But when students see we're serious about needing their views, they show us they know much more than we ever guessed. And although they might not have the solutions to the problems (or they very well might complain), they show us what to think about, they show us how they learn, and we think of possibilities for helping them learn more.

We still have a long way to go, but we've also come a long way--from a district with a highly traditional curriculum to a staff that's now exploring, one that's more willing to change. I believe the changes we've gone through are possible anywhere. It takes teachers who question, who learn from their students, who see the possibilities change can bring, who believe in themselves, their students, and their colleagues. It has to begin with that. Once begun, the development will probably never end.

Secondary Language Arts and Art

by Deane O'Dell
McGrath School
McGrath, Alaska

My Bingham Trust grant evolved into a project that integrated art into the instruction of secondary English. So, these days I am doing lots of art in my English classes. I do art because I have found my students enjoy the classes more. But more importantly, I find the quality of their work has improved. I believe art provides another way to brainstorm, formulate, express, transform, evaluate, and appreciate ideas in the English classroom. For many students, formulating visual images sharpens their thinking about a subject and strengthens their writing. I asked some students in my Advanced Composition and Literature class to tell me how they feel about art in class.

Question: Is art of any value to your learning in English class?

Dawn: Sometimes you draw things that you can't write about. The art tells its own story.

Lorena: It doesn't make class so boring.

Kym: Sometimes it takes away from my writing, but sometimes it makes it better.

Question: Which is easier for you to do--draw an idea first or write about it?

Amy: It is easier for me to visualize first, then write about it.

Dawn: Art shows you a different side of things. I like it. It helps me think and motivates me.

Art and Poetry

In Advanced Composition we study periods of art and their relationships to history, literature, and music. We just finished a unit on contemporary art and we looked at how themes in that period were the same used by contemporary writers. We looked at how the teachings of Freud influenced the world of art and writing. One assignment I gave was to have the students produce a poem to match a favorite painting form the period. A later assignment was to produce a piece of original art demonstrating some of the techniques found in the contemporary period. Then the students wrote pieces to go with the art. Here is a sample piece of student poetry inspired by a favorite painting. It came out of a study of surrealistic art and writing influenced by the dream world. The student chose the painting by Marc Chagall, *The Blue Circus*, as a subject for her poem.

"The Blue Circus"

The moon was up at high noon
And the singing horse was making his way to the catfish weeding
The chicken was the best man
And the Marilyn Monroe Madonna wanna-be was the bridesmaid
The bride carried an old-fashioned fan
And the groom carried an alarm clock
To be sure he was on time.
Amy Wise, grade 11

From this stage of writing about other people's art, we move to writing about our own.

Children's Books

My students also write and illustrate children's books. Each book is bound and a cover is designed and produced for it. Most of my students consider it their favorite all-time writing assignment. To begin, they read and evaluate fifty children's books. They review the books on both story and art work. From this point on, students set their own prioritites in the project. Some students do the pictures to their books first and then the story. Others must start by writing a story. The project takes a considerable amount of class time. There is something about the nature of an art class which enhances the nature of an English class. I think it has something to do with hands-on experience. I justify my time spent teaching art by viewing art as another critical thinking skill. The parallels between art and writing are many. Students must determine point of view, style, theme, content, mood, and organization for both. Ben, one of my students said, "Children's books are fun. It's a whole other form of writing. The words shape the pictures; the pictures shape the words. They both tell the story. Art and writing--you can use either."

Art in English

I am inclined to believe Vygotsky's opinion that art is a necessary mode of expression for studies beyond the age it is used in schools. I notice there is a range in the quality and the content of self-expression through art which does not always correspond with the students' abilities to express themselves through writing. Some students do better telling stories or expressing ideas with pictures. Most tell their best stories with words, but not all. The notion of art in secondary English needs to be explored.

On a personal level, I found my own ability to teach art at first limited to my love of art and one cartooning class I had taken twenty years ago. I found myself enrolling in an art methods class one summer where I learned about many art mediums. That class did a great deal to increase my confidence in pairing art with language. Another great aid came in the form of art museum publications such as *Talking to the Sun* by Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell (The Metropolitan Museum of Art).

The Bingham Grant gave me the funds to buy supplies which are still being used in my classes: paints, brushes, inks, art slides, photos, posters, film strips, and some computer software. My school budget can now handle replacing supplies as needed. The grant gave me the financial means to try something new and do it well. It has made my classroom a better place for students. The results of the program have been recognized by my school district as valuable. And art has become an objective in our secondary language arts curriculum. It is there to stay.

Tununermiut Qanemciit Qulirait-llu: Achieving a Sense of Self and Community Through Shared Narrative

By Ben Orr
Paul T. Albert Memorial School
Tununak, Alaska

Tununak is a small Yup'ik Eskimo village on the Bering Sea in Southwestern Alaska. The first language of the village is Yup'ik, and almost all children come to school speaking Yup'ik as their first language. In the first three years of school, kindergarten through third grade, Yup'ik is the principal language of instruction and thereafter the children are taught in English. Subsistence hunting and fishing is the main occupation of the village.

The community has a rich oral and ceremonial tradition. Up until now, this has been a largely untapped instructional resource. There is the village, and there is the school. Seldom do the two meet. In 1987 we started receiving the first of our grants from Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity. With the money, we were able to get traditional elders to come into the school, as volunteers or as paid resource people, to share their knowledge and experience with the generation of students still in school. In the case of storytellers, we recorded many of the narratives. Groups of students, working with Yup'ik speaking bilingual instructors who were literate in the Yup'ik orthography, transcribed and translated many of the stories, which were typed into computer files and archived. Eventually, we were able to illustrate these stories using students as illustrators.

We had little knowledge of what was involved, of the long and laborious process of going from oral narrative to a finished publishable product, but we learned the hard way. We learned all the difficulties and subtleties of translating from Yup'ik to English, two very different languages, as well as the complexities of desktop publishing and printing. It was a lengthy immersion into narrative, translation theory, and the cutting edge of computer technology.

This year we were fortunate to get a new administrator who immediately saw the value of what we were doing. Without hesitation she committed school funds and resources to our project and moved to expand the scope of contacts between the school and the traditional community of elders and tradition bearers. For one week at the beginning of the school year and for a week at the end of school, the entire school staff organized a traditioanal Yup'ik arts festival.

Elders came to the school as instructors in traditional arts and activities. For the duration of the festival, the entire curriculum was built around traditional activities and exchanges between elders and students. The festival was a complete success. For the first time, the school operated as a bridge of generational communication, not as a barrier. Traditional artists and narrators are once again a part of the school community.

Exploring Home

by Vera Scarbrough
Oakdale High School
Oakdale, Tennessee

I was drawn into a new philosophy of education that included allowing students to perform real and important work for valued audiences when I accepted a full tuition scholarship to the Program in Writing at the Bread Loaf School of English in the summer of 1983. After having Shirley Brice Heath the first summer, Dixie Goswami the second summer, and Nancy Martin the third summer, as well as hearing Eliot Wigginton speak at Bread Loaf, I implemented their ideas about students' writing in the classroom. Ultimately we wanted to publish, but our other funds would come over a three-year period.

Rationale and Professional Goals

Asking students to keep a journal is certainly not innovative. However, I am pleased with the goal my students and I accomplished when we kept a journal for a specific purpose. Because so many instructors, writers, and colleagues had inspired me at Bread Loaf to use their principles about getting students to write on something they can relate to, I decided, "Why can't my students write about their hometown and publish a book like Wigginton did with *Foxfire*?" No one, certainly not a group, had ever written a book about Oakdale so there was our motivation. My goal was to have published authors, both teachers and students, and we accomplished that.

Teacher's Role and Responsibilities

As the teacher and co-author, I had the students:

1. *research* old newspapers and documents in the county seat about Oakdale's history;
2. *copy* the articles into their journals and *write* reactions;
3. *interview* old timers and transcribe their tapes, along with *writing* introductions;
4. *research* each community name, school and church and *write* a new history;
5. *gather* human interest stories and old photos, if possible, and place them in their journal. Students would *write* in peer groups and share same;
6. *reserve* a bulletin board for the students to share their findings;
7. *allocate* every Friday as a sharing day and a day to decide what would be kept for out book and what would be discarded; and finally, as the teacher, I had to
8. *edit* all material.

Activity Description: Oakdale, 1880 to the Present

Many times I had to assign specific people and places in the community that had not been covered. Together, the students and I formed committees and did various projects. For example, there was a committee that did nothing but research all the schools in Oakdale and the surrounding communities. Another committee covered the stories on all the famous landmarks, such as the famous YMCA and the old Babahatchie Inn. Another committee researched the town's disasters and the tragedies of war. There was a committee to proofread before I did the final editing. My students and I shared in delegating the responsibilities and seeing that they were carried out. That's one reason we can rightly be called student-teacher co-authors! Since our project was taking on such depth, we asked the school board if we could create something that had never been done before in our county, or in the state for that matter, an English V class. The board said "OK" to us if we got state approval. Our duty would be to write a book in class and publish the same. Of course we were not bound by curriculum guides or books and that was wonderful, for we wrote our own rules and our own book. Over a three-year period, thirty-one students participated in English V and received credit for a grade of 85 or better. Every student was a success.

Benefits to Me as a Teacher

As an instructor, I learned the benefits of having the students assume a lot of the responsibility. One of my students wrote in his journal, "I really don't like my other English class, but I like this one because I am my own boss most of the time. And I like English V because we don't have to read a book. We are writing our own book and I think it's going to be the best book I've ever read!" I think one of the reasons Charles (not his real name) liked the class is that he could take the responsibility for his own actions (I gave them the chance to grade themselves). He made a "B" in English V but consistently failed his English II class. Another student wrote in his journal, "I could have given myself all A's in English V, but I didn't feel like I deserved them. You have to work hard to get all A's and I would goof off some. But when I did something great and everybody bragged on me and I knew it was good, you better believe I gave myself an "A."

I learned the value of teacher and students working together toward a common goal. We both shared the responsibility of the book being published and we worked together on our journals and final grades. Sharing responsibility and, as in this case, allowing students to assume part of the teacher's authority, helps build trust. It also lets the students see that teachers are "real" and can do all right things.

Benefits to My Students

Many of the students who took English V were not the best students in regular English classes, but while working on the Oakdale book, they learned grammatical skills and writing techniques while the project unfolded. When they made "A's" on what they *knew* and *did* rather than what they *didn't know* or *hadn't done*, everyone performed miracles. Publishing a book is not the only success story to come out of the Bingham-funded English V class. As a result of our writing the book *Oakdale: 1880 to the Present*, the entire community enjoyed publicity from the *Knoxville News Sentinel* and TV 6. Both came into the small town and did a feature about Oakdale. One student made a presentation at a teacher workshop at the University of Tennessee. Others participated at county and district workshops and told about their writing project. Libraries wanted copies of our book and the state of Tennessee's humanities program awarded us a grant for the best new innovative program in a high school English/writing class.

Every teacher in the school has a copy of the Oakdale book that they can share with their students in grades K-12 and use as a local resource for community school history.

Seeing all the talent that a community has and that schools can utilize has helped me realize that instructors have to use a variety of methods and resources if they want to be effective teachers. The benefits to my students on this particular project is priceless. For them to know the different lifestyle that their seniors experienced fifty to a hundred years ago astounds them. They sat with complete attention as each new person came along and told their story. Having students to appreciate their background, learn about their past and share it with someone other than their teacher causes them to be more attentive. I found out that students like to have someone other than their teacher in format of them all the time.

To say that the students became better writers is an understatement. The students became excellent writers! Along with improving their listening and reading skills, they learned that writers have to become aware of their audience. They gained valuable hands-on experiences for all the communication skills. They achieved a depth and balance between the teaching of history and the teaching of writing. They provided consultation and help for other students when we all instigated a school-wide writing project that celebrated Tennessee's 200th anniversary. They were eager to share their writing with peers and brought the best ideas for future projects. They developed a passionate preference for writing and weren't aware of how far their abilities would lead them. They mobilized school, faculty and community support because of their devotion to the English V class and the book they were publishing.

What It Meant to Shrink the World

by Jeffrey Schwartz
Greenwich Academy
Fairfield, Connecticut

Strange as it seems now in 1991, when I began my Bingham project, word processing was just being introduced in schools; telecommunications was almost unheard of. Our goal on BITS (BreadNet In the Schools) was to use *both* as tools for writing, to give our students an unprecedented opportunity to learn about themselves for real reasons to a real audience.
Six years ago in the fall of 1984, my wife, Betsy Bowen, and I joined Bill Wright and Joanne Tulonen in an experiment with telecommunications that would eventually grow into BreadNet, Bread Loaf's electronic network. Two years later, with funding from the Bingham Trust and the NCTE Research Foundation, Joanne, Bill Noll, and I designed a complex, three-way cultural writing exchange for our students, at a private school outside Pittsburgh, in a tiny school in the ranching community of Wilsall, Montana, and on the Sioux reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. In October 1896, I wrote:

My first month back at school has been taken up with the BreadNet plans and exchanges. School began late because of construction, and I had to bargain my way into the new computer lab, which didn't get hooked up till September 15. Since then my students have mailed over 100 pieces of writing to students in Wilsall, Montana, and Kyle, South Dakota. . . . To coordinate this exchange, Joanne, Bill and I have been on the modem almost every day, and a few times on the telephone as well. It's been draining but well worth the effort. I should add, too, that without our two earlier years of stumbling and gradual progress, the project wouldn't be half as extensive or exciting as it is.

"The project is simply amazing," I wrote three months later. "In addition to everything the students (and their teachers) learned about writing and cultures, they also learned about the new technology almost none of them had experienced before."

The electronic exchanges, I was discovering, expanded the context of the classroom. They are making learning real. I had always been excited by experimental learning, especially as it appeared in projects like Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire, Dixie Goswami's model of teacher-research, the philosophies of Dewey, Bruner, and, in English, Jimmy Britton's work and Jim Moffett's student-centered curriculum. At Wilsall High School, Little Wound High School, and Sewickley Academy, we were putting these theories into practice, as students became engaged in genuine communication. The computer, like a telephone or fancy pencil, was simply the tool that facilitated a fast correspondence and created the effect of shrinking our world.

Students sent letters, notes, drafts and revisions of essays, questions, interviews, community descriptions, and oral histories by electronic mail to interested readers across the United States. Because the three communities were so diverse, the questions were real. What did teenagers do for fun in the Rocky Mountains, in Pittsburgh (dubbed, then, the "most livable city"), or on an Indian reservation? What was school like? Or family, religion, economy, geography, career goals, school spirit? How do you describe your community to someone who had never seen it? Writing teachers talk about ways to make writing real, to have students write for an audience beyond the teacher, but how is it really possible in most schools? In our project, students had to stretch their imaginations beyond their isolated worlds and come to terms with economic, racial, and cultural differences that they never could have confronted in the same way. One student wrote:

> This course was designated to help students improve their writing. But I feel that I have learned something valuable to me along with improving my writing. One can study about a place, battle, or people, but one never truly knows and understands a people until he has corresponded with those people. In this class we have corresponded with people that many of us know nothing about. We may speak the same language, but we are very different. ("Using an Electronic Network to Play the Scales of Discourse," *English Journal,* March 1990, p. 20.)

The following year, with further support from Mr. Bingham and the Pittsburgh Museum Commission, I designed a cultural writing exchange within the geographical boundaries of Pittsburgh. This time students and teachers in Sewickly and Clairton, Pennsylvania, two economically opposite communities linked by their shared history in steel, would write and eventually meet through studies in English, history, and computers. I wanted to see what would happen when two local communities exchanged electronic mail. The principles were the same. We emphasized collaboration, student-generated questions, genuine communication, and breaking down stereotypes.

This time, though, we focused more on inquiry. In "On the Move in Pittsburgh: When Students and Teachers Share Research," I wrote:

> As students pursued their own questions, they had to choose the best method for finding out. Would answers best be found in a book? A survey? A lecture outside class? A phone call to town hall? A trip to the public library? By close observation? Students used all of these methods. They interviewed and wrote about parents, grandparents, administrators, teachers, older residents of their towns, the first woman architect in Pittsburgh, and a former managing director of the Civic Light Opera, among others. They brought to class an author, a filmmaker, an officer from the local historical society, and a long-time resident of Sewickley who had lived in the first post office west of the Allegheny Mountains. They conducted schoolwide surveys; assembled

statistics from the public library, the town hall, and the school's development office; read books, dug up old photos, and attended outside lectures. They learned that different questions require different sources of information. In the process they also learned the difference between traditional research and what we call inquiry. *(The Writing Teacher as Researcher,* edited by Daiker and Morenberg, p.156.)

My students and I shared a process of inquiry that helped us to collaboratively construct the course. Authentic learning was the focus of the writing exchanges. At the end of the Sewickley-Clairton exchange, one student wrote:

> This was the most exciting English course I have ever taken. The reason I liked it so much was that I had a say in it. I was part of the class; so often you feel as if you are merely "in" the class. . . . I think that all of these experiences suggest that what you learn is only as interesting as how you learn it. If you copy information from an encyclopedia, your paper will probably be as boring as it was to write. And furthermore, what idiot couldn't look something up in the encyclopedia? You have to have fun when you research--you have to think of a way that will make it interesting to you personally. Then you can be enthused about it and your paper will show your enthusiasm.

With inquiry as the center of the course, the power of the classroom shifted to include the students in some of the decisions traditionally owned by the teacher. We were interested not only in "what you learn" but in "how you learn it." Learning to write, then, could mean learning to use language in all its diversity--from the traditional academic essay (after all I was teaching and still am teaching at a college preparatory school) to other genres, including notes, questions, letters, interviews, surveys, stories, poems, dialogues, news reports, oral histories, etc.--and , of course, it meant drafting, sharing, revising, and editing those genres as necessary. When the focus shifts to how to learn, writing as *reflection* becomes more important too. In reflection, we think to write, to clarify, to make sense of our experience, to understand how we work and learn. Inquiry--and I would argue all knowing--depends on this kind of self-consciousness, the ability to step back and generalize from observations. James Britton says: "What we know must be reformulated in the light of what we perceive and our knowledge is thus forever on the move" ("A Quiet Form of Research," *Reclaiming the Classroom,* edited by Goswami and Stillman, p. 19).

Another Bingham-funded project that focused on authentic learning was a magazine I started called *Voices Across the Wires*. For five years my high school students edited this national publication of K-12 writing. Three of those years were funded by Mr. Bingham's Trust; more recently Greenwich Academy, my current school, took over the expense. For the past two years at Greenwich Academy, fourth grade and seventh grade co-editors became involved with their twelfth grade leaders, so that in 1989-90, 112 students produced *Voices*. The last issue had grown from a simple Xerox of electronic mail submissions in 1985 to a fully illustrated, perfect bound magazine, designed and produced with sophisticated desktop publishing. The original elements of my Bingham projects were still there--use of computers, student control, culturally diverse writers--but on a more sophisticated level.

Voices is the only national magazine I've seen where the whole process--from soliciting and choosing writing to designing and distributing the publication--is entirely student-controlled. Even our ten-year-old editors have proven that young people do have the ability and critical perspective to make decisions about quality. The whole process is an inquiry into those very decisions. Students are engaged in the questions: What is good? How can you tell? Who decides? What if someone disagrees? How is good different from what one likes? And how is one's judgment influenced by others' opinions or contextual factors such as age, educational background, or clashing values? As one student wrote:

> The magazine is the most exciting thing I've ever done. Perhaps, it was also the hardest. Reading all the submissions was time-consuming, but very fulfilling. I had to examine and re-examine my criteria for good writing. It was hard to decide between all of the pieces from all of the schools. . . . The magazine provided the opportunity for me to get a glimpse of life in different parts of the US. This country is big and so diverse that the story about the birth of lambs fascinated me. I got to see what my contemporaries are doing in their part of the country. In a way, it helped unify the US and made me feel closer to all of the people.

Another said, "I learned a great many things while working on the magazine, but I think the most important of these was how difficult it can be to work with people. I'm not saying the people in our class were purposely difficult to work with--they were great, but it was often very difficult for us to agree." It's this very paradox that made *Voices* and my other Bingham projects such rewarding, and at the same time, such difficult experiences. They all required collaboration between a great number of diverse individuals. The beauty of that is that we learn about people (and ourselves) as much as we do about writing. But it is hard to collaborate. It takes time; it takes relinquishing a degree of control; it takes compromise.

It's so much easier in a classroom to just tell someone what to do. It's so much easier to ask answerable questions or to score the darkened bubbles on a standardized test. It is so much harder to listen to what *everyone* in the class has to say. It is harder to plan for intellectual sidetracks in a curriculum, to follow a good, open question. It is harder to share decisions among a group of people, to share the creation of a task or its evaluation. It is harder to create real contexts for learning and writing in a classroom, to make it possible for students to write for real reasons to a real audience, to use writing to learn from literature or experience, to use language to create meaning. It is also hard, when you collaborate, to genuinely respect everyone else's point of view--the fourth grade editor, the writer from Clairton who unintentionally hurts the feelings of her correspondent, the Native American in South Dakota who never heard of lacrosse, the author in New Hampshire who uses "unacceptable " language to express the brutality of his mother's boyfriend, and so on and so on. We learn to respect ourselves and each other by learning to understand the world around us.

I've been lucky to work at schools like Greenwich Academy and Sewickley Academy that have allowed me a great degree of independence in my classroom. While the Bingham projects are now just wonderful, exhausting memories, the principles that drove those projects continue to drive my curricula. Even when, for whatever reason, I can't institute them, I'm a better teacher for reminding myself of the necessity to involve my students in their own learning and to create contexts in which they can ask genuine questions and participate in the design and assessment of their own work. Even when I don't reproduce them, the Bingham projects are the concrete model for learning that continues to poke its sunny face into my classroom when students write to a real audience, when they choose their own reading, when they respect their authority as learners, when they collaborate in or outside the classroom, or when they collect their work in portfolios to assess their own progress. In these ways the waves of my earlier work ripple, recess, and refract within the artificial classroom that is always trying to make writing and learning real.

As the deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait draws near, the same deadline as for this article and the birthdate of Martin Luther King, I hear CBS's *Countdown to Confrontation*, and marvel at how language is used to manipulate. I wonder how people from different cultures can use language honestly in a way that causes genuine understanding and peace in the world. My experience with electronic writing exchanges was never meant to heal the problems of the world. It never changed personalities, and in some cases, I'm sure we distorted the complicated truth by oversimplifying the process of knowing. Sometimes I know we misled ourselves by glorifying our temporary excursion into other peoples' lives. And yet somehow I have to wonder how much dissonance can be overcome by communication that depends, as ours did, on collaboration and mutual respect. When I see pictures of black students integrating South African public schools for the first time, when I re-read the moving piece of literature by a 17-year-old from Michigan (the only story chosen unanimously for *Voices* by my students last year), or when I remember the correspondence of the boy in Pittsburgh whose stereotypes of "cowboys and Indians" were changed by writing to others his age in Montana and South Dakota, I have hope, again, that in our children's education there is still promise for a better world.

Networking: a New Ground in Kentucky Schools

by Carol Stumbo
Wheelwright High School
Wheelwright, Kentucky

Writer's Line, the telecommunications network for Kentucky teachers, is now a reality. Susan Wood and I spent a great deal of our summer attending planning sessions, talking with teachers, and helping the new network gain some kind of structure. The focus of those discussions was not on the technology but how to use that technology to emphasize writing. Conferences have been created in which students from one end of the state to another can post writing on one of three conferences: elementary, middle, and high school writing workshops. Teachers and students from more than thirty school districts are now represented on the network--all are writing and talking about the writing with each other. New Ground, the mother conference, has officially moved to the New York Institute of Technology, and we are still using that network as a place to explore the possibilities of writing and telecommunications. We are trying things out there that would not be possible on Writers' Line. One of the new conferences this year deals with responding to student writing--the problems that students have in articulating their feelings and perceptions of writing--how do you help someone become a better writer? Another one is Appalachian literature and still another is called Community Stories in which students locate good story tellers and record their words for others to share in. Older conferences that allow students to post writing (Writing Workshop and Reading Workshop) are still going strong. Things have been slightly slower on New Ground this year because many of the members are involved in the development of Writers' Line. We believe that activity will pick up on New Ground as the need for heavy involvement in Writers' Line decreases. The number of counties represented on New Ground is five at this time. We think that will grow.

Cost Effectiveness

Each of the participating school districts has been given money from the state to purchase the necessary equipment to become a part of Writers' Line. Some schools have had to purchase modems or computers while others have simply had to install a telephone line. In addition to the start-up costs, the Kentucky Department of Education is picking up the schools' on-line fees for this academic year. A great deal of Susan's, mine, and the time of others was spent this summer and fall in helping get that network going--everything from training sessions to visits to assist with technology problems. I traveled to two different state gatherings as well as to a couple of local counties to assist teachers. All of the above has been paid for by funds allocated for the state writing program from the Department of Education. An article dealing with New Ground appeared in a fall newsletter from Kentucky Council of Teachers of English. My own school district has allocated $100 to each of the fifteen schools in our district for the purpose of using telecommunications as a writing tool. So far, we have not had to spend any of the money from the Bread Loaf in the Schools Project for telecommunications. I am hoping that we can use the grant money to extend writing in a slightly different direction as a result of the funding we have obtained from state and local resources. I feel as if the money that has come from the Bingham Trust has been spent well. The total amount allocated by the Kentucky Department of Education was $50,000. The amount given by our local district was $15,000. Because of those commitments, hundreds of students across this state are writing and learning.

Continuing Work on BreadNet

Bill Wright has led all of us into some interesting areas on BreadNet. Earlier this year, I took part in two conferences that were of special value to me. One was a short conference that involved a dialogue with BreadNet teachers and professors who have had quite a bit of experience in technology and writing from some major universities. This conference was called Gateway and I learned for the first time what some of the universities are doing with writing and computers. Another conference that has proved valuable for my students has been one called College in which several of my students have written to and asked questions of students at Middlebury College in Vermont. In both I have seen the value of connecting the writing that we do at the high school level with that of college students. We have three college teachers here in Kentucky who are planning to take part in a similar exchange on New Ground. Exposure to these students and their writing offers a different model to high school students, one that will hopefully enrich their own writing and thinking.

BreadNet: Going Out to Come Back

by Raymond Williams
Franklin County High School
Franklin County, Virginia

One great value of computer networks is that they provide a real audience for students. The students care about this audience and think as they write, receive responses, and write back. They want to respond, not for a grade, but to communicate.

This year on World Trade, my students received several essays from New York City students that stressed the negative side of the city. In responding, several of my students mentioned that the New York students shouldn't be so negative because at least New York had more to offer than Franklin County where the only thing to do was "go cruising and meet people in the Hardee's parking lot." They also mentioned that Franklin County was known as the moonshine capital of the world.

Several New York students then wrote:

> We understand that your view of NY is distorted, because the negative aspects of NY were the only ones that got the most attention in Kareem's letter, but Kareem did mention good things, too. We also received a twisted image of Virginia from your letters–it seems that your town is full of hicks who can't find anything better to do with your time than make moonshine and cruise parking lots—though we are probably wrong.

Another group responded:

> Hi! First of all we would like to thank you for your comments and responses you wrote back to us. We're sure you think that we are exaggerating a great deal (it shows in your letters), but New York City is truly a place where the crime rate is unbelievable, although we did exaggerate but not as much as you thought we did... What you said about Franklin County seems to prove that you guys don't have as much fun as we do. In other words, our lives are much more interesting than yours. Here in New York City there's so much more to do and see than just cruise around parking lots.

The New York responses started an active, sometimes angry debate in my classes. Some students thought the New Yorkers were putting down Franklin County. "Why do they say all we do is make moonshine and ride around in parking lots?" one asked.

I asked the class, "Why did they say that?"

Another student responded. "Because that's all we mentioned in our letters."

Still another student pointed out that the New Yorkers said it "seems" that's all we do in Franklin County, so they were commenting more on our written descriptions than on the county itself.

After more discussion, the students realized they had bought into the stereotype of Franklin County, and through lazy writing they had perpetuated that stereotype. Most admitted they rarely cruised. "So if you don't cruise and make moonshine, then why is that all you mentioned in your responses?" I asked.

By this point, students couldn't wait to write responses so they could set the New Yorkers straight. Others asked, "When do we get to write essays like they did telling about what goes on here?" For years I would argue with students who complained that nothing ever happened in Franklin County, so there wasn't much to write about. I rarely convinced them to change their views. Being part of World Trade has made most of the students realize how one sided their complaints about the county are.

They've also written pages and pages about Franklin County in all its aspects, including a few descriptions of cruising.

Developing BreadNet for the Schools

by Lucy Wollin

Laguardia High School for the Arts

New York City

At Park West High School I had my most exciting success with Den Latham's students in South Carolina. The picture of urban minority kids discussing the Howard Beach incident in writing to white rural kids in a small town who countered with their own ideas about Forsyth County has never left me. The freedom to write frankly about ideas which is given by the faceless computer is invaluable. These students were able to explain themselves to each other without the stumbling block of appearance and found themselves to be more similar than different. Another exchange paired a class in Den's school with a class in New York in a discussion of Camus' *The Stranger*. They asked each other questions, answered them, discussed the answers, organized literary arguments, and impressed me immensely.

The following term at Park West, I involved a teacher who had taken a telecommunications course and was looking for an exchange about local environments. She was given her own password and proceeded independently. When I left Park West, she stood up in front of the whole faculty and told them that I had saved her sanity by rescuing her from burn-out! She hoped to continue on BreadNet and did so for a while. She was searching out other options the last time I spoke to her, but said that participating in BreadNet had changed her whole outlook on the possibilities for computer use in the teaching of writing.

Last Spring, at LaGuardia High School of the Arts, I involved a teacher in World Class. She uses the same methods as the teachers involved with BreadNet and was always ahead of me when I went in with the timetables and suggestions which came over the network. Her class was so enthusiastic that it was a high-water mark in both my career and hers to watch them run with the idea. They were so stimulated by the World Class exchange, which engaged them in writing about very varied environmental questions according to their interests, that they turned out an illustrated book of essays, which I am enclosing with this note.

There are other teachers who have also participated in BreadNet here. I think that (judging from my experiences in extremely different schools with very different participating teachers and students) the possibilities for valid and valuable use of BreadNet are endless. I will continue to fund these activities because I feel that the benefits so far to everyone concerned have been incalculable.

I have also found the conversations about censorship, assessment, and other topics which have been discussed in various sections of BreadNet very stimulating. Like others, I have found an important community of not only like-minded but unlike-minded folks, willing to argue about ideas which are of major professional and personal interest to me.

As a librarian, I have found in BreadNet an opportunity to enlarge my soul to include a role as extender of curriculum and facilitator for others in extending their possibilities. This may be the most valuable personal attraction of BreadNet. The ability to widen my students' perimeter of experience as well as my own is one which I never would have without the network.

The World Class project last spring was written up in the Manhattan District Superintendent's Newsletter. I wrote up my experiences at Park West High School for Sharing Times, the newsletter of the Bureau of Libraries of the New York City School System.

Going Beyond the Basal

by Ann Young

Seneca High School
Seneca, South Carolina

It was quickly apparent as I began a teaching position in a state half a continent away from my Midwestern home that the curriculum for remediation was all too familiar-- high school students were reading elementary basal readers and attempting to master one discrete reading skill at a time. The program was individualized in that each of the remedial students was placed, at the beginning of the year, in a reader based on his or her score on a standardized test. The students' weekly task throughout the year was to read a story and do its accompanying workbook pages. Their writing was limited to answering the questions on workbook pages, generally in a word or two. What was the purpose of all this reading, and where was the teaching in my new teaching job?

I met Dixie Goswami and explained my dilemma as I saw it. How could I get interesting reading material into the hands of my high school students? How could I get them out of books written for children and into material appropriate for their high school level? And finally, how could I introduce whole language into the existing diagnostic-prescriptive basal program? Dixie introduced me to Ike Coleman, Director of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, and though the year had begun and funding was pretty well spent, Ike thought he could fund me if I could develop a project. Good fortune came my way. A teacher, Den Latham, at another rural high school in the county was in his second year of a highly successful Bread Loaf project. Den and his students were beginning to prepare their second issue of their magazine *Oconee*. He accepted my proposal that my students would serve as guest editors of his students' publication. My dilemma was solved. My students would read material written by peers across the county, thus almost guaranteeing that they would find it interesting. This seemed all the more true because the subject of the magazine is the history and the culture of the county. My principal and my co-teacher in the reading laboratory allowed me to take one-half hour per week away from the existing basal program to introduce a small group of the reading laboratory students to the project. Though only a fraction of the five hours per week I met with these students was to be spent in a whole language situation, it was a significant beginning. I would teach according to my purposes-- using collaborative learning and interactive strategies to guide the students toward an understanding and enjoyment of the printed word.

The project lasted one semester and involved seven students. The first two to three months were devoted to preparing the students for the task of evaluating content and editing the first drafts of the student articles. Brandy, one of my students wrote:

> We met every Friday during class. When we got in class we read stories and discussed them. Also, we answered questions Mrs. Young gave us. We talked about how we as teenagers could give good suggestions to other high school students. We would understand the person who wrote the story.

For instructional purposes, Den supplied us with several first drafts of stories written by his creative writing students. I asked my students to evaluate content by asking such questions as: What do you like best about the article? What sections need more information to make the story more understandable? What sections could be cut because they cause the article to ramble? I coordinated a list of editing symbols with Den to be sure students from both schools would be familiar with the same signs. We gave these to our students on a handout with explanations and examples. The students had a lot to learn in just six one-half hour sessions. Jason analyzed the difficult nature of their task:

> I think I would have done a better job if I had known more about punctuation because it's hard finding punctuation where it is needed in a sentence. I have learned a lot more about it since when we first started. I can spot things more easily than before.

By the beginning of April, the first articles began coming through the county's interschool mail service. I described the content of each article, and the students chose according to their interests. The articles came to us in large envelopes and contained a first draft and often photographs. In each case, a student-author had interviewed a resident of the county and discussed topics which had some bearing on the county's history, its people, and its culture. Each resident, from fashion designer to Vietnam veteran, had a story to tell, and each student had an article to write.

My students generally had a dozen articles to choose from, and they seemed to have no difficulty finding an article of interest. Donna wrote: "The students' articles were great. Why I liked them so much was because they were very interesting." Wanda added: "I liked them because there were things that I never knew or heard about before." As the teacher, I liked the articles because I knew my students were reading and enjoying the printed word from material they had chosen themselves and material that related to their local history and culture.

I directed the students to keep a running letter to the author as they read. By doing this they could accomodate the considerable length of the handwritten articles (approximately forty doubled-spaced, handwritten pages). They commented on content, organization, and mechanical errors. I told them, too, that as editors we were intruders into another person's thoughts and ideas. As such, we should be kind and gentle in our evaluations, complimentary as well as critical. I served as a role-model giving suggestions, sharing frustrations, and thoroughly enjoying the reading experience. Greg wrote:

Our purpose in evaluating the articles was to give our opinions and help in any way that we could. When teachers check papers, they check the items that are correct and mark out the ones that are wrong. We told them what was wrong, told them how to correct mistakes, and gave them compliments all at the same time. I believe that was better than simply telling them what's wrong.

I think Brandy's comment serves as a subtle reminder to teachers: "High school students today will surprise you when it comes to writing something they are interested in. Plus, if I said I hated an article, the student would not think, 'Well, she's only in high school. What does she know?'" Brandy's comments point to her belief in herself and her peers in that they are learners with powerful abilities to write, read, and lend substantive advice.

By the project's end, each of my students had evaluated two to three articles. By mid-April our evaluations had to be returned so that the student-authors could use our comments as they created their final copies for publication. I had not forfeited my whole language time with the students yet, so I devised several other projects for the remaining six, one-half hour sessions that were scheduled. The students liked the idea of writing articles themselves and publishing our own small magazine. But the idea we all liked best was writing a collaborative article about our experience.

Our relationship had changed throughout the semester. It began with me as the teacher who designed their preparation; I chose the stories they would evaluate. Now as articles came in, my students began making decisions. They chose the articles that they would evaluate, and I chose mine. We shared the topics that we had chosen and the accompanying photographs. Working side by side, we evaluated articles. We took the time to share a humorous part, or a new discovery, or a frustration in understanding. We were all engaged in making choices and decisions, in giving constructive criticism, and in enjoying the power of active learning. From the semester's experience, it came as no surprise that we would best like the notion of writing an article together.

Each week the students responded to questions that would form the basis of the article. I began by drafting a page or two to provide the necessary background and narrative introducing their comments. The students had the opportunity each week to read, comment, and edit what I had written. Questions included:

As well as you can remember, how did we prepare to be editors?
What did you think of the student articles?
What did you think about being a student editor?
Has the project had an effect on you as a reader and writer?
Was the project worth your time and effort?

Shannon describes the effects of the project. "The project has changed me as a reader because now, when I am reading, I direct all my attention to what I am reading. It made me more aware of what I read. As a writer, it seems easier to catch my own mistakes." Brandy adds, "Now I find myself changing lots of words around."

In answer to the last question regarding the project's worth, Greg wrote: "Certainly! We got a grade for our work, learned something, and enjoyed it, all at the same time." Donna's comment reflected an opinion shared by all of us, "It not only helped me, but it helped the students at the other school, too." I believe Donna's comment demonstrates two points I will always remember from the project: Students want to use and develop their language abilities in real communication situations which help others, and collaboration among teachers and students is an effective technique for teaching reading and writing.

I believe the most profound benefit of the project was the involvement of students in reality-based assignments. My students provided guidance to students across the county, giving substantive advice regarding articles that became important to both the author and the editor. Editors wrote to authors and authors responded with letters of appreciation which often included, "Be sure to look for my article in *Oconee*." We had experienced the joy of successful collaboration.

The involvement in a real, ongoing project in which students could make a difference determined the success of the project. The students enjoyed the project because it had a purpose. Their reading and writing skills improved along with their standardized test scores for the year. They were integral to the successful publication of the magazine, and they knew it! The familiar negative attitudes of students labeled "remedial" in reading and writing had changed.

(I would like to thank Greg, Shannon, Donna, Wanda, Brandy, Jason, and Felisa for their contributions to this essay. I especially thank them for their enthusiasm and their trust so that together we could create a reading program which would be challenging, purposeful, and exciting.

Part Two

Assessment

Assessing assessment, part two

by Dixie Goswami

In the 1989 Fall/Winter issue of *Bread Loaf News*, we published an excerpt which described student involvement in writing from the report that Nancie Atwell and her colleagues submitted about the 1987-88 Boothbay Writing to Learn project. At about the same time, with funding from Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity, Nancy Martin, a member of the Bread Loaf School of English faculty, spent several weeks in this country assessing two other projects: the Bread Loaf Writing Project in Bethel, Maine, and the South Carolina Rural Writing Network.

We knew from talking with Nancy and reading what she's had to say about writing and writing development that she believes assessment should be a positive and acknowledged part of the teaching/learning process. *The Martin Report: Case Studies from Government High Schools in Western Australia*, 1980, provides an intensive study of English in six schools, analyzes internal and external features in school contexts that influence the quality of teaching and learning, and makes recommendations to administrators, teachers, and others. We were certain that Nancy's work in Maine and South Carolina would serve many purposes. Not only would we benefit firsthand from her insights and observations, we would have, in her reports, important documents that might serve as guides to those who wish to gather information about literacy that will provide a context for test scores and that will make sense to students, parents, teachers, and planners (and perhaps even commercial test-makers).

We're convinced that the quality of writing programs frequently depends on the nature and quality of writing assessment programs. As we enter the fifth year of the Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program, it is apparent that being able to describe the successes (and failures) of writing projects is important, if the projects are to survive in spirit or in substance beyond the period of outside funding. Nancy's reports have proved to be enormously valuable to us, as the basis for thinking critically about what is happening and why(and about what might happen) and as sources of information for those who have questions about the projects. But we certainly did not make the best use of these reports. It is clear now, at this late date, that we would have benefitted by having workshops that would have prepared us to continue gathering information and engaging in on-going, systematic analysis and evaluation. Nancy's Western Australia report is organized carefully and deliberately for readers with different needs and purposes for reading: We should have prepared several versions of each report to distribute to those involved in the projects.

We asked Marguerite Graham, co-director of the Bread Loaf/Bethel project, to re-read Nancy's report and to comment on it from her present perspective.❑

Dixie Goswami teaches at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C., and directs Bread Loaf's Program in Writing and the Writing Grants Program.

Nancy Martin's report, in retrospect

by Marguerite Graham

Two years ago Nancy Martin spent ten days in Bethel observing the Bread Loaf/Bethel project. When Nancy returned to England she wrote a comprehensive report based on her interviews with students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The report reflects Nancy's gift for asking questions that stimulate thoughtful responses.

The main focus of the project is improving student writing proficiency through weekly support meetings for teachers. We meet every Thursday afternoon: some weeks we meet to share our discoveries about our own writing and our students' writing. On alternate Thursdays we meet at grade level to discuss issues of literacy .

Nancy recognized the importance of teachers meeting regularly, and she encouraged the administration to make time for a similar format in the school schedule. In the fall of 1988, the administration agreed to dismiss children at noon on Wednesdays so that teachers could meet to talk about language and learning. This practice was cancelled after a brief trial period: Parents petitioned the School Board to protest sending children home early. Perhaps with much discussion and careful consideration of the consequences of the early release plan, we could have avoided this outcome.

Nancy's recommendation that teachers help plan and write the language arts curriculum, supported by the Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services and emerging knowledge from literacy research, helped us change from basils and workbooks to a process approach to writing and reading.

The focus of our project has come to include teachers and students writing and publishing. Nancy's report emphasized the problems that occur when teachers do not see "the connections between their own writing and the writing they were getting their students to do." Our teachers' group has begun its own publication, *Bits and Pieces*. Our goal is to publish locally, for each other and our community, and later to submit articles and stories to professional journals.

When we look back to our early journals and to the beginnings of the project in 1985, we see how few of us were inviting students to choose topics and texts. We had no writing curriculum: we used mostly basils and workbooks. We've made progress, but we're still learning. We have a deeper understanding of the points Nancy made in her early report, especially about the need to build a community of teachers (and parents) that provides trust and support. Having Nancy Martin come as an "outsider" to Bethel to ask good questions, to observe, to listen, and to help us made sense of what we were doing was invaluable and changed the entire process for us. Hers was truly a "shaping" evaluation. If we had it to to over again, we would try to undertake this kind of description, analysis, and reflection on a regular basis. Moreover, we believe that documenting the project as Nancy did for us is an important kind of assessment that allows us to talk about our work to other members of the community in more meaningful ways.❑

Marguerite Graham is the Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator in Bethel, Maine.

Assessing assessment, part three

by Dixie Goswami

In the 1989 Fall/Winter issue of *Bread Loaf News*, we published an excerpt from the report about students' writing that Nancie Atwell and her colleagues submitted for the 1987-88 Boothbay Writing to Learn Project, funded by Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity as part of the Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program. In the 1990 Summer issue of *Bread Loaf News*, we published a summary of Nancy Martin's assessment of the Bread Loaf/Bethel Writing Project, with comments from Marguerite Graham, director of the Bethel project.

Both Atwell and Martin take the position that assessment should be a positive and acknowledged part of the teaching/learning process: Their beliefs and practices assume that schools can and should be centers of ongoing local inquiries, with teachers and others producing information and insights about children's learning that help shape curriculum and classroom practice.

In spite of what we know about the potential of teacher research for supporting meaningful assessment, schools and states that encourage and use this kind of work are hard to find. But in the 1990s, with diminishing resources and increasing pressures on teachers and students, assessment and accountability are key issues. Certainly, those of us whose programs are supported by private sources know that we must find ways to describe our successes and failures if the projects are to survive, in spirit or in substance, beyond the funding period.

Elspeth Stuckey, director of the South Carolina Cross Age Tutoring Project, consults with REACH, a humanities and literacy collaborative funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, on assessment. At selected sites (where teachers choose to participate), she observes, videotapes, tapes, interviews, and transcribes. She also asks questions of herself and all involved about what we're doing in assessment and why we're doing it.

In February, 1991, when Stuckey spoke to a group about South Carolina Cross Age Tutoring, she invited us to think about and define the project in terms of what would need to be assessed in order to represent its complexity and diversity. It's important to note that her list comes from ongoing systematic and intentional gathering of information as well as her insistence that what happens in schools and in projects be seen in the context of past and present personal and community histories.

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South Carolina Cross Age Tutoring (SCCAT)

by Elspeth Stuckey

If you would like to assess:

- the deep humanity of students
- the ability of students to express their educational and social needs
- the ability and willingness of students to help each other
- the resilience of students to failure and risk
- the ability of students to create communities of their own

If you would like to assess:

- the extraordinary inquisitiveness of students
- the extraordinary abilities of "disabled" and tracked students
- the quickness of students to grasp difficult and strange ideas
- the interrelationship of the humanities, the sciences, and math

If you would like to assess:

- the educational bankruptcy of standardized testing
- the destructive impact of standardized scores on the lives of students, teachers, and school systems
- the wasted financial resources on standardized testing

If you would like to assess:

- the ability of teachers to nurture
- the ability of teachers to re-think their roles and capabilities
- the impact of supportive administrators, especially principals and superintendents

If you would like to assess:

- the existence and impact of rural poverty on the daily lives of children
- the impact of school penury on the education of students
- the shattering of natural and social communities
- the vast, chronic need for simple, daily assistance in shattered communities
- the changes in students as they grow from pre-kindergarten through adolescence in marginal environments

If you would like to assess:

- the linguistic growth and development of students
- the rhetorical growth and development of students
- the ability of students to stretch all boundaries of literacy and reasoning
- the growth that is "greater than the sum of its parts," to quote Miles Meyers

If you wold like to assess:

- the complete inability of schools to address issues of race, class, and gender
- the necessity for minority teachers
- the resegregation of the schools
- the power of children to address hard issues

If you would like to assess:

- the power of technology to aid learning
- the inutility of technology when done in the interest of testing
- the sheer excitement of students to master a technology new to them

If you would like to assess:

- the kind and amount of money required to redesign education
- the ability of students and teachers to put money where it matters
- the lack of expense required for off-the-shelf, pre-packaged programs
- the stupidity of most educational training

Then: You would like to assess cross age tutoring.

• • •

We'd like your comments on the implications of Stuckey's work for local—or national—assessment policies and practices.

Those of us working on projects funded by the Bingham Trust have learned a lot about assessment from Atwell, Martin, and Stuckey—and from our mistakes—and from many of you who are reading this note. Given our resources and needs, we have opted for qualitative, descriptive, interpretive assessment—which perhaps will help us make sense of quantitative testing and assessments of our teaching and learning—and we see our experience with teacher research as a way into this matter. We're envisaging inclusive, context rich, participatory assessment across cultures and institutions, and we're trying to figure out how BreadNet might help us accomplish some of this work.

As we move into another phase of Bread Loaf in the Schools, with the Bingham Writing in the Schools grants for Bread Loaf teachers, we'll begin at once to document:

What we're doing (looking at global aspects of the program as well as its effects on teachers' and students' understandings, practices, and abilities).

How we're doing it and

Why we're doing it (with Stuckey's "If you want to assess" document as a guide).

Future notes on assessment will take up the matter of writing and reporting on the assessment process, including the premise that narrative is an appropriate, persuasive way of presenting researches and assessments.❑

Dixie Goswami teaches at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C., and directs Bread Loaf's Program in Writing and Writing in the Schools.

A report: the Bread Loaf/Bethel project

by Nancy Martin

Nancy's report is reproduced below without appendices or transcripts. If you have questions about Nancy's report or if you use either (or both) Nancy Martin's or Nancie Atwell's reports to plan alternative assessments of literacy in your school or community, please write to us at the Clemson address.

Introduction

The Bread Loaf project at Bethel, Maine, can be shown to be a very successful one. The project operates in a close-knit community with a population of about 2,500. There are two elementary schools in Bethel itself and two more at distances of fifteen and twenty-five miles respectively. The joint middle and high school (Telstar) is in Bethel, as is Gould Academy, a private, residential school. Thus there is, within a small area, a large number of people concerned and interested in the schools.

The Bread Loaf grant is given to teachers in separate schools, but is in the conduct of Will and Marguerite Graham who are both active members of the Bethel community. Will Graham, a graduate of Bread Loaf, teaches at Gould Academy. Their purpose, in common with all the Bread Loaf projects, is to work to improve students' writing—and through their writing their learning more generally—and to draw into this venture as many local residents (including teachers) as are willing to be involved.

I propose to analyze in some detail its specific features because it is possible that some of these might be transferred with benefit to more dispersed projects.

I. Organization

Each project is the result of the ideas of individual teachers together with the possibilities offered by local circumstances, but since the publication of *Bread Loaf News* it has been possible for ideas and activities operating in one project to be applied in others. Good organization has played such a powerful role in the Bethel Project that I feel it is important to identify its particular contributions to the success of this project. Activities were systematically planned and developed—a function of understanding the role or organizations in the changes being fostered.

Good organization can be seen as a major operating feature in the following activities.

A. Developing and maintaining cooperative activity among teachers locally and more widely.

1. A weekly meeting of teachers in the project (one hour and no more) was seen as the main drive and principle of continuity. Regularity was essential, and the Grahams added a further significant feature—brief reports of each meeting which went to each teacher, to the principal of the the schools, and at times to the high school which is not in the project, and to the superintendent. These reports contain decisions, future plans, points of theory, suggestions made by the group or added by the Grahams.

Over time, these sheets display the history of the development of the teachers, and in their record of plans, ideas and purposes for action, constitute a program of teacher education and achievement. The administration of grant funds reinforced the weekly meetings—$15.00 was paid for every three attendances at meetings plus a stipend of $20.00 per year to each teacher's students to budget for writing projects. With so many participating teachers, the grant was more of a psychological than practical incentive.

2. The weekly meeting gave the opportunity to review and plan the participation by many of the teachers in other community activities connected more broadly with education, for example, participating in the Curriculum Review Committee , either as members in discussions when its ideas were presented at the weekly meetings, or planning presentations at the annual gathering at the Maine Council for Education in Language Arts. Because such activities are part of the regular planning and review incorporated in the weekly reports from the meetings, the project is made explicit and available for reflection and modification. In short, some of the most valuable functions of writing have been built into the structure of the project. It needs to be noted that these brief records and advice sheets are not minutes in the usual sense. They are more like notes from a journal of events and discussions.

B. Developing and maintaining cooperation with parents.

1. Contact and cooperation with parents is not *ad hoc*. Marguerite Graham keeps an up-to-date list of parents who volunteer to help in the schools. There are some seventy names on the list, and flyers go out from time to time indicating what particular kinds of help are needed. There is also a roster which covers all subject areas, and parent volunteers are invited to the weekly teachers' meetings on special occasions.

2. A sheet of information about a teacher's classroom aims and the ways in which parents can help their children is available from time to time outside classrooms.

3. There is also the practice by some first grade teachers of regularly sending home duplicated copies of children's writing. As in the case of the reports of the weekly meetings, writing has been used as the chief means of organizing parent cooperation.

C. Developing and maintaining cooperation with students: publishing and classroom modes of action.

1. To date, the project has been focused on students in elementary schools where the kinds of cooperation necessarily involve much practical assistance and advice from teachers and other helpers, but the focus on an external publication and the drawing in of parents to read and discuss their children's writing gives a public voice to what the students write and is an incentive to master the basics.

2. In Bethel, the Grahams' focus on organization led them to arrange financial support from local business firms which enabled a regular monthly feature in the *Bethel Citizen*. This item came to feature as a central point in the weekly meetings leading to discussions about quality in writing. Quality, as distinct from mere accuracy, is difficult to describe, but can be perceived and is a significant development from the starting aim of getting every student competent enough and confident enough to produce some sort of written piece for publishing. Such a development is a slow process involving writing, reading what others have written, discussing, and choosing. All these can be seen going on in classrooms as students read to each other, conference with teachers and parents, make their bound and illustrated books for classroom use, and talk to their teachers about their contribution to *Young Voices*. The practical nature and consultative procedures involved in all this publishing have caused changes in classroom modes which, to some extent, are finding their way into lessons in other subjects where writing is taking hold. Classrooms are tending to become workshops.

II. Character of the leadership

The second outstanding feature of the Bethel project lies in the attitudes and forms of activity of the leaders. While it was clear to me that support from administrators was a crucial feature in all the Bread Loaf Projects that I have knowledge of, the Bethel administrators not only gave support, they gave active leadership.

A. Active involvement by the school principals.

Mrs. Davis, principal of both the Bethel elementary schools, had started meetings with several teachers in the Bethel Bisbe School in 1985 before the Bread Loaf project began. The following year, some teachers from Crescent Park School joined the meetings, so there was already a foundation to be built on when the Grahams launched their more highly organized pattern of meetings and reports. Later, the principal of Woodstock School, fifteen miles away, asked if his teachers could join, in spite of the distance. Three teachers from Woodstock now attend (1987-88). Reports from the meetings go to the fourth school at Andover, twenty-five miles away. Mrs. Davis attends the meetings as often as she can.

B. The superintendent's efforts to extend the project.

The superintendent, Mr. Dewaine Craig, formed an administrative executive group and invited Will Graham to present proposals for a district-wide project. There would be no funding available from the district, but a state innovative grant would be applied for.

C. Initiative from the staff development committee.

A group of administrators and teachers (coordinated by a teacher from the high school) organizes an annual workshop for all teachers in the district. Two of the project teachers serve on this committee and Will Graham assists.

D. Active participation by the superintendent.

Mr. Craig is once every week in each school of the six schools, and this availability is non-threatening. His administrative team meets twice a month, and he meets with each principal in the school each week with an open agenda. I had a long interview with Mr. Craig and found him knowledgeable about what was going on in the schools and the classrooms and the project and also knowledgeable and concerned with educative ideas.

I am told that this kind of presence and active participation by administrators is rare. Superintendents and principals are often office-bound, do not visit schools much and very seldom go into classrooms.

E. The principal of Gould Academy (private school).

There is another feature in the structure of the Bethel project that could not have been planned but that has been highly influential in the way the project has been able to develop. The principal of Gould Academy, Mr. W. Clough, would like to see the school as an integral part of the community. There is a history of rift between the academy and the citizens, and Mr. Clough's aim is to heal this rift.

He says that the challenge is to find ways (that are not condescending) in which the school and the community can work together. He thinks Gould Academy itself benefits as much as others by such cooperation. I am told that such community cooperation from private schools is rare.

In an interview Mr. Clough stressed that he did not want the part played by Gould Academy to be seen for more than it was. He sees Gould as a part—and only a part—of a community's concern with involvement in education.

Nevertheless, from an outside viewpoint such as mine, it needs to be said that the amount of Will Graham's time that goes into the project together with the use of Gould facilities for production and distribution of written communications would, if reckoned in financial terms, constitute substantial support.

In trying to achieve an overview of this project, it seems clear to me that part of its success must be attributed to the active leadership given in the ways the administrators work in the schools and the way Gould Academy works with the project. Together with the Grahams and many of the teachers, a powerful team of leaders can be seen at work.

III. Redirecting and strengthening the project

A. It should become a district-wide project. There is strong local pressure for this, and the project leaders have consequently made practical proposals about how this might be done in the year 1988-89 through further loans of Will Graham's time from Gould Academy. In detailed terms:

1. Although officially the project comprises teachers from the four elementary schools, it already has *ex officio* members from the middle and high schools.
2. The high school has requested official membership.
3. The superintendent's executive group of administrators has asked Will Graham to make a formal, structured proposal for a district-wide project.
4. Mrs. Davis has made a formal proposal to the School Board to institutionalize weekly teachers' meetings. This would require a state innovative grant.
5. Will Graham has obtained his principal's approval of an increase in the time he would need to spend on the project if this is to be achieved.

B. Writing could be extended to adults in the community through the Adult Education program (of which Will Graham is a member), which conducts short courses on many topics. Introduction of a writing project here would provide much greater opportunity for cooperation with students if the high school came into the project. Even without such cooperation, writing would be a valuable additional activity in the community.

C. The project leaders need to give further thought to their suggestions for developing the teachers' own writing. They have already come a long way from their original question asking if teachers were willing to write on the same topics they give to their students. The first response was "No." They then tried brief logs giving accounts of purposes and reflecting on results. These were not popular. Now, they allot time in some of the weekly meetings for teachers to write or to share things already written. This is proving much more successful and they no longer get "No" responses; the teachers are beginning to see that their own writing plays a significant part in developing student writing.

IV. Features that might be applied elsewhere

A. Developing the use of various kinds of writing within the project is needed to communicate with administrators and others in the community. This would be additional to fostering writing among the students. Such writing might include:

1. Weekly reports going to principals, administrators, teachers in neighboring schools, associated teachers of other subjects and the school board.
2. Periodic communications to parents about the kind of voluntary help needed and explaining how the children's writing is being used in classes, about invented spelling, about conferencing.
3. Reflective logs or brief journals by the teachers, shared and discussed from time to time as a means of protection against the tyranny of being too busy to think about what they are doing.
4. Teachers' own open-ended, free choice writing, done, in part, in the weekly meeting, to parallel the writing done by students and to be shared with them.

B. The character of the leadership given by the administrators is not within the power of a project to determine, but I would suggest that serious attempts be made by the project

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leaders to draw in their administrators. Here, I think, the reports from the Bethel teachers' meetings are likely to have had an effect. Direct invitations to visit particular classes could be given as part of a general attempt to keep the administrators in the picture.

V. Suggestions for institutionalizing parts of the project

A. Attempt to arrange with administrators a regular time for teachers to meet to discuss their work. This is already a proposal from the district. Students would go home early one day in the week so that teachers could meet.

B. Plan for new leadership during the last year of the project. This would mean organizational decisions about who would take responsibility for keeping the meetings going, for producing reports and other communications.

C. Institute annual gatherings to keep contact, keep ideas flowing and bring students into planned continuity. Some abortive attempts have been made by Bread Loaf teachers. Could funding be found to institutionalize this? The annual NCTE convention has served in the past.

D. The magazine, *Bread Loaf News*, should try to find funding to keep going as a parallel means of contact and development to the suggested annual gathering. I would further suggest that some student contributions should be sought.❑

Selected publications by Nancy Martin

Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, and Rosen. *The Development of Writing Abilities, 11-18* (MacMillan, 1975).

Lightfoot and Martin, eds. *The Word for Teaching Is Learning: Language and Learning Today* (Heinemann, 1988).

Martin. *The Martin Report: Case Studies from Government High Schools in Western Australia* (Australia Education Department, 1980).

Martin. *Mostly about Writing* (Boynton/Cook, 1983).

Martin, D'Arcy, Newton, and Parker. *Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum* (Ward Lock, 1976).

Martin, et al. *Understanding Children Talking* (Penguin, 1976).

BreadNet: past and future

by William W. Wright, Jr.

BreadNet is one project funded by the Bingham Trust for Charity guaranteed to continue, with funding from Middlebury College. BreadNet actually began well before the Bingham Trust funding: The concept for the network was developed in 1983, and the project went online in 1984. But in spite of some pioneering work by teachers like Joanne Tulonen and Jeffrey Schwartz, during the first couple of years, BreadNet looked like a valiant but doomed experiment. In those early days of computer-based telecommunications, the hardware and software were too frustrating for already overworked teachers to be willing to struggle with. And, just as importantly, online time was too expensive, especially for rural schools.

The grant from the Bingham Trust gave BreadNet the necessary boost, allowing students and teachers all over the country to join the network with the crucial online time paid. With Bingham funding, BreadNet has become in many ways a pilot for national educational telecommunications. From early person-to-person pen pal attempts, BreadNet teachers and students have developed innovative structures for computer conferences. In addition to teacher talk, during the past couple of years in particular, student communication on the network has been sharpened and streamlined in a variety of conferences, including World Trade, World Class and NA Talk (for Native American students). Most importantly, the dialogue between students and teachers has increased. On conferences like World Class, readers often can't distinguish the writing of teachers from that of students. And students are more and more frequently helping to plan and shape the dialogue.

BreadNet's success has caught the attention of educational forces at the national level. Linda Roberts, at the Office of Technology Assessment, points to the network as a model for the nation. And the National Council of Teachers of English is now shaping a network with BreadNet as a foundation and model.

Funding from the Bingham Trust has brought the network through an era, from telecommunications' infancy toward its maturity. Now, with steadily improving software and hardware, computer-based telecommunications is feasible for schools, and because of the increasing popularity of the medium, online costs have come down a great deal.

At this writing, a bill is in Congress to fund a national network for research and education, and several states are now creating their own networks. In short, educational telecomputing is here to stay. Probably within this decade, every school in the country will have computer-based communication.

But BreadNet is not simply part of a national trend: It still has much to offer as a model. Telecommunications of all kinds is now coming into schools, and some of it poses risks. There's a big movement, for example, toward multimedia and video. Though this, like most technology, has constructive potential, in many cases the equipment is so expensive that poorer schools can't afford it, unlike computer-based telecommunications which requires only the very cheapest hardware. And the kind of writing done on a network like BreadNet provides an important alternative--or supplement--to video technology requiring students to be passive.

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BreadNet will soon be evolving again, with the addition of its own host computer, allowing teachers on the network to make many more connections to other networks around the country and the globe. In addition to connections to other educational networks, the BreadNet host computer will allow access to major networks like BitNet, an international academic network. BreadNet teachers and students will be even more closely connected to the world.

How to join BreadNet: *Bread Loaf teachers who want to join the network for 1991-92 should call the New York Institute of Technology to open an account. The NYIT number is 800-462-9041. In addition, Bread Loafers joining the network should send a letter to Bill Wright, director of BreadNet, 1250 24th Street NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20027; phone: (202) 466-0533, fax: (202) 466-3079, June 25-August 10: (802) 388-7945. Include mailing address and home and work phone numbers. The cost will be $39.95 for the initial subscription price, plus $9.25 per hour for online time. Teachers and students should budget about $250-$350 for a year of telecomputing.*

BreadNet

BREADNET:

an on-line community

by Susan Walker

BreadNet Project Director William W. Wright, Jr., is an Alabama native and a graduate of Sewanee and Bread Loaf. Bill "got interested in computer stuff" while completing a one-year program in administration and planning at Harvard. He has also served as a project director/editor at the Document Design Center of American Institutes for Research, in Washington, D.C. Bill's background in computer communications and teaching (three years at a Birmingham middle school) helped make him, in the words of Paul Cubeta, "the shaping force behind BreadNet."

Director Bill Wright relaxes on a Charleston, S.C., piazza after getting an anxious new BreadNetter on-line.

Chief Little Wound and American Horse and Fast Horse they went to Washington in the early '70s. . . And they asked for a church and a school but it takes an act of Congress and it takes two years later for the appropriation. Before they got the appropriation Chief Little Wound came back and started the school himself. They build a little log house and they used that for church and school. They didn't teach the children but they teach the Lakota language to the elders . . . .

Roy Bull Bear is talking about the history of the Little Wound contract school on the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. Little Wound student Rachel LePardo interviewed Roy Bull Bear and sent the written interview via computer to a Pennsylvania prep school and a school in a Montana ranching community. The absolute silence of the telecommunications link was, oddly enough, also the sound of three worlds colliding . . . and connecting.

That link is BreadNet: the computer network linking Bread Loaf teachers in the Program in Writing, their students and associates.

From Apples to BITS

In 1984, the vision of Writing Program Coordinator Dixie Goswami and Bread Loaf Director Paul Cubeta, along with a generous donation from Apple Computer's Corporate Grants office, made the "Apple Cellar," or computer lab, in the basement of the library at Bread Loaf a reality. There teachers are trained by Academic and Computer Consultants Betsy Bowen and Jeff Schwartz to use computers for word processing and for participating in the telecommunications network of BreadNet. They learn to send and receive electronic mail ("E-mail") by means of a "modem," which transmits messages through telephone lines. (McDonnell Douglas Corporation donated connect-time on their electronic mail system, OnTyme, support which ended after the 1986-87 school year.) These electronic messages are fast and painless and thus make it easier for busy teachers to communicate quickly and flexibly with each other. After the teachers learn how to use a microcomputer, they are loaned one or more for their and their students' use during the school year.

Teachers use the computers to stay in touch with colleagues in the network, to conduct limited classroom research projects, or to undertake more ambitious, three-year "BreadNet in the Schools" (BITS) projects. These last were made possible by a grant from Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity, which provided funds to expand the network for rural English teachers and their students from kindergarten to eighth grade. Five Bread Loaf master teachers are currently conducting BITS projects: Joanne Tulonen in Wilsall, Montana; Linda Henry (with Bill Noll) in Kyle, South Dakota; Ken Holvig in New City, New York; Jeff Schwartz in Sewickley, Pennsylvania; and Ken Leupold in Socorro, New Mexico.

BreadNet is more than a support system

These teachers work with other interested teachers, instructing them in the use of telecommunications and word-processing, and in discovering new ways for their students to interact and fully use the new technology to, in the words of Betsy Bowen, "provide students with broader, more purposeful contexts for using literacy."

Energizing the global village

BreadNet is more than a support system for teachers. It enables students in wildly different communities to share information about themselves and their worlds – allowing them to write from what they know, to an audience besides their teacher, with a purpose. They become experts about themselves and their communities and the means for other students on the network to explore different worlds. BreadNet also gives students (and teachers) access to a wide range of resources: information bases tailored to youth services, en-

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cyclopedias, experimental electronic news magazines, specialized data bases, and others. In our information-based society, such access especially benefits rural students, whose isolation often puts them at a disadvantage in the "global village."

As BreadNet Project Director Bill Wright wrote to Paul Cubeta, "The information revolution and all the computers and gadgets that are part of it depend finally on small bursts of electricity called binary digits—known as 'bits.' Bits are organized into codes or 'bytes' that stand for letters, numbers and such. But the primary building blocks are bits. It was a fortunate accident that the project you named 'BreadNet in the Schools' could use such an apt acronym."

Small bursts of electricity indeed. There are many more bursts of electricity in the minds of BreadNet participants than the sum total of those in the workings of all of their Apples combined. Let's look at how some of these bursts of electricity are empowering both teachers and their students and broadening the contexts for using literacy in the classroom.

An organic curriculum

Master teacher Joanne Tulonen lives in the remote ranching community of Wilsall, Montana (population 250). Joanne had used computers in her classroom for two years before joining BreadNet, and her experience fueled her exchanges with several other teachers, one of whom is Tracy Winn in Watertown, Massachusetts. As part of her BITS project, Joanne set up a directed electronic letter exchange between a second-grade classroom in Wilsall and Tracy's younger students. Director Bill Wright has called the Joanne/Tracy team "one of the sharpest in all of pedagogy," as they both wrestle with the problems of electronic communications and explore the uses of the link they have established between their classrooms.

That link enables them not only to troubleshoot problems specific to their project but also to discuss spontaneously, as opportunities present themselves, methods and approaches to teaching writing. After a letter exchange between their classes, Joanne wrote Tracy via BreadNet:

> What do you think we should do next? Should we let them continue with the penpal letters and suggest topics to focus on? I can see that despite the transportation topic here, most of them had other things on their minds as well, such as dinosaurs, Thanksgiving and inventions contests . . . . Perhaps we could brainstorm within our classes to come up with more ideas.

Joanne's and Tracy's project is developing and changing even as they carry it out. They are immediately able to apply what they're learning as researchers in the classroom to classroom practices. Perhaps their assignments are too prescriptive. Maybe their classes would enjoy brainstorming and coming up with their own topics for letters to penpals. It is a growing, organic curriculum.

Second grader Maggie Pope, of Wilsall, Montana, writes her penpal in Watertown, Massachusetts.

U.S. Mail vs. E-mail

While Joanne and Tracy could use the good old U.S. Mail to conduct their project, think of the nearly two-week time lag involved in completing a communication: three to four days minimum to send, the same to receive a reply, in addition to the time it would take to write the reply. Think of the almost inevitable flagging of interest in the students participating in the letter exchange. Two weeks is practically forever to a first or second or eighth grader—and it's a good chunk of forever in most classrooms.

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"Is Ashley Brown pretty?" Patricia Candal's students in Georgetown, S.C., match faces to the names of their WRENS keypals in Jo Ann Wigington's class upstate.

Think of a teacher's or school district's budget and how poorly a whopping long-distance telephone bill for consulting calls (as an alternative to the mail) would fit into it. Think of how much easier – and, thus, more likely to happen – it is to sit at a keyboard and immediately send a message than it is to write a letter (or bundle up dozens of students' letters), find a stamp, make time to go to the post office, and wait days for a reply. Here, BreadNet is accomplishing things in the classroom that would not be as feasible or practical otherwise.

A lifeline for teachers

Besides making it possible for teachers to share information with project co-workers, BreadNet allows a teacher to talk to an entire group of interested colleagues in the middle of a busy school year. Bill Noll and Linda Henry teach in the Little Wound contract school in Kyle, South Dakota. The community is small, isolated, troubled.

Bill and Linda have been given "an open tab" to explore all the possibilities of commercial electronic networks for themselves and their students. Bill Wright commented, "Bill is trying services, and taking part in multiple student exchanges that we might not encourage in the long run. I think it is super that Paul and the Bingham Trust were willing to support this experiment. Bill is finding out what is and is not realistic for other rural schools – and we are shaking this down into something that teachers can manage and afford."

Yet in the same electronic message in which he described to other BreadNetters what he saw as some of the shortcomings of E-mail, Bill Noll wrote a detailed analysis of the revision practices of his Native American students on the computer and in groups, thus making a strong, if implicit, case for the value of BreadNet to a rural teacher:

> There is more leaning over to see screens; friends point out "mistakes" to each other, helping each other print, asking how things "sound." I'm worried about ruining this natural, intrinsic sense for revision by packaging it in a classroom lesson and perhaps grouping people together who may not be interested in having certain people read their papers. I think particular classroom dynamics really affect how well "helping circle" type revision groups work. Is anybody else concerned about this revision question? What do you notice in your students' word processing revision practices?

How else could an overworked teacher in a remote area discuss writing theory and practice with interested colleagues in the middle of the school year?

Master teacher Ken Holvig is one of the most enthusiastic and active members of BreadNet. Teaching at Clarkstown South High School in New City, New York, Ken has made BreadNet a part of his professional and personal life. His classes have used it to edit a publication of student writing and to exchange writing with other classes, among them, Bill Durbin's in Cook, Minnesota, and Cindy Myers' in Seneca Falls, New York. Perhaps most importantly, Ken says, "BreadNet has become the source of life for our community of writers and researchers . . . . I am absolutely convinced that BreadNet – this life-line connecting me to those *in need* and those *I need* – has added a dimension to my teaching that I cannot measure . . . .I have had . . . almost daily communications with Bill Wright, Betsy Bowen and Jeff Schwartz, Ken Leupold, Joanne Tulonen and other BITSERS."

In the BreadNet classroom

BreadNet does more than allow teachers to write to each other via E-mail. Bill Wright periodically sends out group announcements to those in the network, suggesting new sources of information, new sub-networks and teleconference possibilities. Teleconferences enable participants to carry on long-term discussions on chosen topics of interest, with any number of people. Bill occasionally alerts teachers to special projects in which their students might be interested.

Bill also provides a hard, thoughtful surface against which to bounce new ideas for BreadNet applications. Ken Leupold has been exploring a number of commercial networks to gauge their potential for Bread Loaf users, as well as working on several different classroom writing exchanges. He commented about his contact with Bill: "Bill is easy to work with and very supportive. He doesn't pull too hard on the reins to try to stop us from doing something we really want to try unless he is absolutely convinced of its failure from the start."

Bill isn't the only source of help in the system. Apple Cellar Coordinator Betsy Bowen is Academic Consultant on BreadNet. A teacher and Ph.D. candidate at Carnegie-Mellon University, Betsy is, like Bill Wright, a kind of facilitator in the system. She sees a big part of her job as modeling good dia-

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logue in the network: "It seems almost presumptuous . . . with as good and informed a group of teachers as we have in BreadNet . . . . However, I know how difficult the time pressure and general busyness of school can make it for teachers to correspond the way they would like to. So I've felt that one way I can help BreadNet work well is to prompt some of that good correspondence by bringing up issues of language and learning and by pointing out interesting books and articles."

Betsy also checks in with participants in BreadNet and fields questions when Bill Wright has to be out of town on BreadNet "housecalls" or business. All the while, she is examining the use of BreadNet so that she can document and describe how it works. She and her husband, Jeff Schwartz, have spent a lot of time talking about the system at conferences, sharing what they and their fellow teacher-researchers are discovering about the intelligent use of computers and telecommunications in pedagogy.

As is true in the Program in Writing, in BreadNet it is important that theory and understanding always underpin practice. Jeff Schwartz commented: "The philosophy behind our projects [is] important . . . . Just as anyone can type on any old computer or junk software, anyone can use a computer and modem.

"It has made it funner to write"

What really matters is how we and our students use the machines to learn. BITS allows us to imagine the possibilities, to make mistakes, and to see things work . . . . It's the development of solid, successful curriculum ideas that I think will make our project valuable to our students and also to other teachers interested in experimenting with computer technology."

What are some of those possibilities? How are those little bursts of electricity empowering students and their writing? In a way, the answer involves a classic American tale of cowboys and Indians—and, with a twentieth-century Bread Loaf twist, preppies.

Understanding contexts

One of the most ambitious projects conducted in BITS, and actually antedating BITS, has been a link between Jeff Schwartz's students at Sewickley Academy, a prep school near Pittsburgh, Joanne Tulonen's students at Wilsall High, in a tiny Montana ranching community, and Bill Noll and Linda Henry's Indian students in a contract school on an Oglala Lakota (Sioux) reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. It is as much a link between worlds as schools.

Joanne and Jeff's collaboration moved slowly, as technical problems and time delays the first year meant that they weren't able to use the computer link for what it primarily offered: speed and flexibility. But they did manage some thoughtful exchanges between Jeff's "preppies" and Joanne's "cowboys." As Jeff said, "Cultural exchange was a tremendous part of it." The cultural exchange provided the basis for the transmission of real information—i.e., something the student or teacher doesn't already know—and a real need to write in the classroom, because what is written has meaning outside the classroom. But discovering the fullest use of the new technology and integrating it into the curriculum took a while. The first year, the students mostly exchanged essays—"which plopped down at the other end and just sat there"—leading their teachers to examine more closely the question, "How do you figure out a way to use computers to interact?"

The summer of 1986, when their BITS funding began, gave them a chance to do just that. Jeff and Joanne and Bill Noll worked out an elaborate, carefully planned series of exchanges involving their three very different communities, each of which was, Jeff said, "so different and so easy to stereotype." Instead of assigning a static series of essays, the three had their students interviewing each other and introducing another person in class, the results of which were transmitted to linked schools. Each student also wrote a story about himself, and then began a letter exchange with specific kids in other classes and to the classes in general. Students generated questions about the other cultures, the other ways of life. They collected oral histories and wrote essays about their own communities, got responses from the other communities, and used them to revise their essays. What was important was that "they were writing to someone who was interested and who had real questions about what they normally took for granted . . . . They were learning to understand each other's contexts."

Aid for Gucci

Besides having their own fixed notions of what the other communities were like, students also had to contend with the assumptions of the other communities about themselves.

The following comes from a description of Wilsall to Sewickley:

> Some have said that, being in a town of 200, and being 40 miles away from any town of reputable size, we are secluded, and at times we have been considered hicks. This is not so. Few of the kids wear brogans and straw hats to school, and even fewer ride mules. Sneakers, buttondowns, and Wranglers are quite prevalent among the students, most of whom are quite conservative. We do, however, have a small new-wave factor, which is definitely in the minority. Most of the kids do tend to leave their horses home on Saturday nights, preferring hot engines to cold saddles. I hope I have now clarified our position in society for y'all in the big city.

The tone here is a bit defensive, but, over the months, as the exchange continued, it relaxed and became playful and occasionally self-satirizing as each group realized it had something of value, something distinctly its own, that the other groups found fascinating and different. Wilsall wrote Sewickley:

> According to a recent poll, Wilsall was rated the #1 city in the country (due to a lack of funds, the poll was not conducted in Pennsylvania). Until we received your letters, we thought that Gucci was what you say to a baby when you tickle him under the chin.

Linda Henry works with ninth grader John Quick Bear in the Little Wound computer lab.

Sewickley responded in kind to the "cowboys":

> I told my brother Biff, and my other brother Skip, and Muffy my sister, and Mums, about how none of you had heard of Gucci. They were so sympathetic that they have organized a relief fund—Aid for Gucci. To raise money, everyone here at school has donated all their old pink shirts, light green shirts, khaki slacks, Izod jerseys, scarfs, Blouchers (the preppie shoe), and old lacrosse sticks.

Joanne Tulonen commented that these kids were learning first-hand about satire by creating it rather than simply reading about it . . . and about the value of humor in treating subjects or ideas that might be too sensitive to talk about in another way.

Besides sharing jokes, students gained a sense of respect for ways of life different from their own. A ranching student wrote to the prep school:

> The everyday ritual of feeding begins in November or when the snow comes and stays on the ground. Cows aren't smart enough to paw through the snow like horses so you have to feed them. It usually happens in the morning and it is just a matter of loading the trailer with hay and going out and spreading it out for the cattle so they can all get some . . . .Towards the end of January when the cows start calving . . . you find out how hard it actually is to get out of the bed at all hours of the night to go check the cows and make sure everything is okay.

A Sewickley student replied to Wilsall:

> I'm glad you enjoyed our descriptions. All of us always find yours interesting in some way. I could never imagine having to take care of 50-100 cows or cattle. The only thing I have to take care of is our small dog . . . .

"I guess writing took over . . . . "

Bill Noll's Native American students, in Kyle, South Dakota, added their own dimension to the project, bringing to light some of the problems riddling an entire community and way of life. The following comes from a community essay written by one of his students:

> Problems facing the Lakota [Indian] people are the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Even with the low economy a high percentage of people use them, with alcohol being recorded as the number one cause for deaths. Drugs are not considered a killer but are highly used.
>
> The life outlook for the Lakota people is going in a downward direction, because of the high rate of deaths and abuse. To control it would take great human power or magic . . . .

Jeff said, "Even when the letters from Kyle slowed down, I had [my students] reading articles about Federal aid to Indians and many of them, for 'extra credit,' read *Black Elk Speaks*, their *first* encounter with history from the Indian's point of view. We didn't try to be a history course, but in our way, the students gained an understanding about people that wouldn't have been available in a textbook."

As a final assignment in the course, Jeff's students wrote about what they had learned from participating in the three-way exchange. One student was moved to write:

> Something that is strong in my mind is a kind of respect and understanding that we have built with other students through writing . . . .
> At first it was shocking to hear about what was going on around them. But after we shared our differences, I feel it made us understand each other better . . . The understanding came because we were sympathetic and curious about their environment and they were willing to make us understand . . . . I guess writing took over as our source to communicate and get to know these distant people.

Getting used to the equipment

At this point in the project, Jeff Schwartz is very positive about the opportunities BreadNet has offered students: "As Joanne, Bill, and I are seeing, the ultimate benefits of electronic exchanges are unlimited. We've hooked students on a real writing experience where they are learning about new cultures, appreciating their own, while developing writing abilities and learning about technology all at the same time . . . . They saw the future, and they loved it."

And, at this point, with several years' collective experience behind them, they realize that the potential of such technology can be fully explored only with time and planning. While most teachers probably wouldn't care to embark on such an elaborate—and costly, if paying for E-mail—exchange, any exchange with another classroom requires forethought, if it is to be more than just another computer game. Joanne commented that the key to success in such a project is first to "get comfortable with the equipment" and with telecommunications procedures. The second most important thing is to plan very carefully with cooperating teachers, to have an agreed-upon purpose for the exchange and a clearly articulated approach. "You have to start slow," she said, and "you have to think ahead to classroom logistics. For instance, you need activities for people who aren't on the computer that day." Classes generally don't have the luxury of a computer per student.

Prairie maggots, elementary students

Some of the most delightful and spontaneous writing exchanges involve the youngest members of BreadNet, those who are getting to learn about audience, contexts and voice very early indeed. For example, once Joanne Tulonen and Tracy Winn established a workable system between their elementary classes separated by most of a continent, the kids, whose words were typed for them by teachers or high-school-age "experts," took it from there. Enthusiasm is never a problem with this age group, as Joanne wrote Tracy:

> Operation "Kinderconference" taking off! Wilsall has fourteen second graders. They are very excited about these letters, and hands wave wildly in the air when I pop into the room to pick up the next wave of kids to dictate. Today I typed for two different groups . . . . They watched in fascination, patiently waiting for their turn and thinking of things to add to the letters which they had already composed . . . .

The beginning of a fast friendship—and a significant intercultural exchange—is chronicled in the letters of seven-year-old Robert, of Wilsall, and six-year-old Pete in Watertown:

> Dear friends in Boston,
> My name is Robert Lane Brownell. I live five miles out of Wilsall, MT. What is your name? I live on a farm with cows and horses. Do you? I have seven people in my family. How many people do you have in your family? I am seven years old . . . How old are you? I have brown eyes and hair, and I am four feet tall. How tall are you? I have four dogs. Do you have any pets?

Pete wrote back:

> My name is Pete. I am six years old. I like to read. I also like to watch TV. My sister's name is Roberta. Here are the things I like: chocolate cake, toys, lunch. I am in second grade. I have lost five teeth. My birthday is December 14th. Do you have a school bus? How many children are in your class?

Introductions over, the boys could then explore each other's worlds. Robert wrote Pete:

> I have a school bus. Here are the things I like. Apples, apple pie, toys and strawberries. I like to read, too. My favorite book is Stumpy. It is about a squirrel.

"They saw the future, and they loved it"

> Here is a Halloween story. Its title is *The Haunted House*. It was Friday the thirteenth. That is the only night of the week that the ghosts are out. They will eat you alive. My friend got ate. When they see you, you better run, or else you will get eaten up.
>
> Do you have hunting season? We do. My grandfather got an antelope the first day of hunting season. Me and my dad went hunting and got a buck deer. Do you know what a buck is? A boy deer is a buck. Half my family calls an antelope a prairie maggot.

The boys' exchange later developed into spontaneous disquisitions on dinosaurs, sandwiched into a required letter about kinds of transportation, animals at a local science museum, scary experiences, relatives, computer games, and school events. Their writing here is very much like talking—certainly their individual voices are loud and clear—and probably more elaborate and full of real information than a written-for-teacher paper would have been.

A couple of months into the students' exchanges, which included essays as well as letters, Tracy sent an E-mail message to the BreadNet community:

> I have seventeen children who are six and seven years old and they are writing pages and pages about what is important to them each week. The letters they receive in return from Joanne's second graders are like gifts.
>
> [An] angle that might interest you is that without teacher interference, they have begun to include in their letters stories and poems they have written. We have a spontaneous literary exchange going!

At the conclusion of their 1986-87 letter exchange, Tracy gave her kids a questionnaire about what the project had meant to their writing. Had the penpal project changed their writing? If so, how? Did they plan to continue corresponding after the end of the school year? Some of the responses to the first question were:

> I think it has made me write on the computer more, and it has made it funner to write.
>
> I write mor and my writing gets bedre.
>
> It has changed my stories and my reading.

Joanne's and Tracy's students exchanged seven sets of personal letters, and they also used BreadNet for group letters of inquiry on specific questions. Tracy commented, "There is no question that they are responding directly to one another's words. The letters have gotten longer and longer, so that now it takes quite a while to get everything on disk."

Another indication that "project penpal" was more than an isolated classroom exercise is that "only three out of seventeen aren't planning to continue the correspondence after school is out."

E-mail and "divergent learners"

Telecommunications are not just for the mainstream student, as more than one BreadNet teacher has discovered. Bread Loafer Ned Bradford teaches in the Program of Advancement in Learning (P.A.L.) at Curry College, in Milton, Massachusetts. Students in the P.A.L. program have been previously diagnosed as learning disabled or dyslexic. Ned describes them as "bright, divergent learners and creative thinkers whose writing has been stifled by the criticism of skills-oriented English teachers unable to tolerate irregularity in the conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar." Ned wanted to use BreadNet to connect his students with others with similar learning problems to encourage the flow of written language and to break down the resistance to writing that many of them had developed as a result of years of criticism.

Ned said, "Over the wires, I communicated with Vicki Holmsten and Ken Leupold in New Mexico, Den Latham in South Carolina, and Joanne Tulonen in Montana and suggested that they locate those bright students in their rural schools who were experiencing academic troubles. [From] these four classrooms (and one resource room taught by Angela Jent in Den Latham's school), approximately twelve to fifteen students were located and the dialogues started with my students." Ned's students got from the experience more than just opportunities for writing; they also got, especially with their younger penpals, the feeling of having come a long way and the satisfaction of encouraging someone who still has a long way to go.

Fourth-grader Jenny, in Wilsall, Montana, began one of her letters to Ned's student, Kara, with some of her own typing. Frustrated by the keyboard, she let Joanne type the rest of her letter while she dictated:

> have you ben lurny alot at school I have in math .math is my frate subeget. I downt know way. Wought is yours. I wortht it By my saif . I know I am not the best at spelling .I not a fast Lurrn. Are you I bet you are.
>
> [Now Jenny is dictating.]
>
> It's no fun not knowing how to spell words. When I came to this school I did not know any of my times tables or my minuses or pluses or my long division . . . . Now I'm catching up with the fourth graders. I'm always like one page behind . . . .

Kara responded:

> I'm very glad that you typed some of your letter. I know it's hard. I learned to type in the 10th grade. It took me a long time to learn how. I didn't like it at first, but it became easier the more I practiced. That's the way most things are. I know that spelling must be hard for you. It's the same for me. Don't let it get you upset. You're young, and you'll have many many years to learn everything that you need to know. I used to get mad when I didn't understand something. I used to think that I wasn't as smart as the other kids in my class . . . . Now I know that I was wrong.

Jenny's reply indicates what she is getting from the correspondence:

> Hi how are you . . . . I liked your letter. I'm glad for what you have to say. It helped me a lot. I look at it practically every day. Did you write it by yourself. I'm sure you did. I wrote a little bit of this by myself and then Ms. Tulonen helped me finish it off while I told her what to say.
>
> The sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth we will be having the big tests, the SRA's. I feel kind of scared about them because I've never had them before. The last school gave me one but I didn't learn very much about it. The last school never taught anybody very much.
>
> I have enjoyed these months writing to you a lot. It has been very interesting for me because sometimes I get to skip my class to do it.
>
> Talk to you later. Keep writing.
>
> Love, Jenny

What "realer" audience could you give a student with learning disabilities than a kid with the same problem? In their exchanges, students were using writing to explore some painful truths about their educational experiences and their feelings about themselves.

Other learning disabled students not writing to Ned's students took matters into their own hands. During her letter exchange with Joanne Tulonen's class, Tracy Winn sent an E-mail report about the project out to the BreadNet community:

> One of my students, a second-grader who has trouble processing written symbols of any kind, got an I Can Read book out of the library today. He wants to read with all his heart and tries really hard. The book he selected was called "Arthur's Penpal." He read the whole book. He said he didn't mind if he got tired because he was getting ideas to write to his Montana penpal. Here is an argument for E-mail when anyone is skeptical about its efficacy or applicability to learning disabled children.

"Students are doing more kinds of writing"

Widening the net: publishing

The spontaneous literary exchange happening between Joanne Tulonen's and Tracy Winn's classrooms seems to be characteristic of student involvement with BreadNet. Students are doing not only more writing, but more *kinds* of writing . . . and, indeed, more kinds of writing seem possible. In their elaborate three-way exchange with two other schools, Jeff Schwartz observed that students "played the scales of discourse in a way I don't think they ever could have without our exchange . . . . Students exchanged descriptions of themselves, personal stories, questions, drafts, feedback to drafts, revised essays, interviews, oral histories, and an extended correspondence . . . . We relied on the computers for speed, immediacy, and the motivation that comes from doing something new."

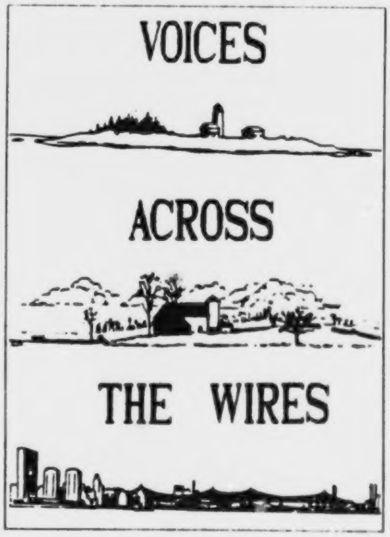
Mark Christensen tentatively concluded in a Bread Loaf classroom research project that students who had frequent access to computers for word-processing did more kinds of writing than those who wrote by hand or had only occasional use of computers. Add to that a real audience provided by the telecommunications link and you have a powerful tool for getting good, engaged writing out of students.

A number of BreadNet students have been looking even further afield for audiences for their writing, and in the process seem to have pioneered the first electronically compiled national literary magazine written and edited by students. Called *Voices Across the Wires*, the first issue was edited by Jeff Schwartz's Sewickley students, who solicited submissions from schools participating in BreadNet around the country. Students at those schools appointed an editorial board and selected pieces to send via modem or disk to the Sewickley students, who then "talked and argued and batted criteria back and forth about how to choose writing as diverse as we received."

The second issue of *Voices* was produced by Ken Holvig's "Writing to be Published" class at Clarkstown, and, like the Sewickley group, they solicited submissions, discussed specific articles, and conferred with the editors of the first *Voices*, all via BreadNet. Ken's students had the added advantage of a local electronic bulletin board system dubbed "ClarkNet," begun by Ken and conducted with the help of student systems operator Ari Samson. "ClarkNet" is an information system available to all Clarkstown High students – and to members of BreadNet – and it is an outgrowth of the idea of BreadNet. It has the enthusiastic support of the Clarkstown administration, and of Bill Wright, who said, "While I think that Ari still has a way to go before ClarkNet is easy for non-techies to use, he is on the way. If everybody had to depend on free E-mail to set up a network, our ideas could not be reproduced. Ken is exploring a cost-effective variation – one that could open up all sorts of new possibilities for a community."

Other student publications are also coming out of BreadNet. Elementary-school children involved in Ken Leupold's project in Socorro, New Mexico, wrote for a young version of *Voices*, and for some books that were distributed locally. Jeff Schwartz's students published a collection of oral histories written for their project. *Smoky City Memories* was a 120-page runaway "bestseller," as the demand for copies surpassed expectations.

Another publication – one that exists only "on-line" – is "Palmetto Points," in WRENS, the Writing and Reading Electronic Network for Students. WRENS is the brainchild of Georgetown, South Carolina, middle-school teacher Patricia Candal and Jerry Lambert, the computer coordinator for Clemson University's Agricultural Engineering Department. Thanks to the generosity of Clemson University and the talents of Jerry Lambert and his department (especially Bonnie Page), the South Carolina Rural Writing Network has had the use of Clemson's state-wide telecommunications network, CUFAN. It has been used to develop WRENS, the network for students participating in the project. CUFAN allows participating South Carolina schools to log onto its network as a part of WRENS, and thus to have access to its information services, communicate with members of the entire network, many of them experts or amateurs in different fields, send E-mail (by making a local phone call!) to participating schools, join a conference and publish their writing in an interactive electronic magazine.



Voices Across the Wires, the nationwide BreadNet student magazine.

While WRENS is not a part of BreadNet, it is another extension of the idea, one that Bill Wright is eager to see explored and used elsewhere. The CUFAN/WRENS partnership is a good example of how using local resources can extend the aims and purposes of a writing network in a way that makes it practical for school districts to implement.

Visions and revisions

One of the intellectual threads that helps form the Net in BreadNet is the idea of helping students become actively involved and engaged with their writing and their learning. To do so, BreadNet teachers have enlisted the help of their students in the various projects. Jeff Schwartz, for example, hired some of his students to help collect and sort information from the reams of writing accumulated in their project. Some teachers rely on students with previous computer experience as consulting experts and troubleshooters in class projects. Other teachers have students working together (as opposed to "working for teacher") in groups, brainstorming, interviewing, editing, publishing. Older kids help younger ones send messages on the system. They are encouraged to take active roles and to use their writing in meaningful ways, not in the boring, classic "What I Did on My Summer Vacation" essays that blighted the childhoods of most of their teachers.

Students are also taking charge of their writing by revising and working with it, seeing it as their own creation and not something outside their control once the last "t" is crossed. In the computer lab she and her husband designed for their Indian reservation school, Linda Noll found that even her previously unmotivated students were becoming engaged with their writing: "Because the computer allows a writer to make changes more easily than on a handwritten paper, students are beginning to make revisions. Usually students write something, hand it in, and don't want to see it again . . . [One of my students wrote a dragon fantasy story during the semester.] When the semester ended before he had edited his work, he decided to come after school several times to complete the revisions. He has spent more time revising than most students spend writing the first draft."

One of the chief benefits of BreadNet, it seems, then, is that teachers and students using it in the classroom become learners and teachers together. And that, as Betsy Bowen has said, is perhaps the best way to "expand the possibilities for literacy." In a recent talk, Betsy commented on literacy researcher Judith Langer's speech at last fall's NCTE Convention:

> [Langer] suggests that students develop sophisticated uses of literacy when they use reading and writing to provide needed information, solve shared problems and reflect on what they know, and that these activities are most likely to happen in situations in which students can both learn from and teach other students . . . . What makes Langer's argument unique, I think, is that she suggests that the uses of literacy in the classroom expand only when we change the roles of teachers and students in tandem. Langer argues that as long as we see teachers as "transmitting" knowledge and students as "receiving" it, we will be bound by conventional uses of literacy and conventional contexts for learning. The possibilities for literacy expand when we re-imagine the roles of teachers and students, to see them as jointly collaborating to create new knowledge.

Problems and potential

Weaving the BreadNet that is making this collaboration possible hasn't been easy. Getting used to unfamiliar equipment, encountering glitches in the system, and figuring out how to use the network in a meaningful way in the context of a classroom all take patience. No BreadNet project has been without its technical problems, which is not surprising, considering how new the technology is. Bill Wright, said "Computer communications may be one of the most powerful uses of a personal computer. Once you get the modem set up, the serial card installed, the communications software configured, it can be fairly simple – rather like using the telephone. However, someone *has* compared setting up to brain surgery. It is not easy. But it will get easier and cheaper. We have seen prices drop and better software develop over the three years of the project."

Cost is certainly a consideration in establishing any telecommunications network. While Bread Loaf couldn't have afforded to set up BreadNet without the support of several grants, Betsy Bowen speculates that "this situation is likely to change as commercial services see that education is a new market for their services and as states and school departments begin to establish their own local-area networks."

But BreadNetters have discovered that there are problems more fundamental than equipment malfunctions and costs. One teacher in a remote fishing village in Alaska, who had wanted to integrate telecommunications into the curriculum, finally gave it up when an administrator insisted that the standard textbook be used 67% of the time – and then proceeded to monitor the class.

Other teachers find that it is sometimes hard to get beyond the mere "pen-pal" letters that often begin telecommunications projects – letters that start "How are you? I am fine" and bog down in superficial chatter. That concerns Bill Wright and Program in Writing Coordinator Dixie Goswami. In a letter to another Bread Loaf teacher, she wrote:

> Even with the letter exchanges, someone needs to be writing good letters to the kids, breaking in on the exchanges, I guess – presenting models to kids of what good writing can be like. This is exactly what Amanda Branscombe, Nancie Atwell, Dale Lumley and many others have done – and it's what makes the difference in the letters . . . . At first the letter exchanges are just another exercise, one that's fun because a machine's involved. But something must happen so that the machine is secondary and young writers feel that they have something to say to other young writers.

Dixie and Bill and the other teachers involved in the network have found that just learning to use the network and making it a part of the "real" curriculum is difficult. She commented, "It probably takes several years if we don't just buy into what is described for us by commercial people. Of course we *must* think about ways to enable and spread good writing. I am sure that this means letting what may seem trivial conversations continue and evolve; pulling out what is remarkable writing; and describing the range of writing that's going on. *And* helping Bread Loaf teachers work with their students to produce good writing."

Most of the little bursts of electricity pulsing through BreadNet indicate that *something* is happening in these classrooms, and on a surprising scale. This past year, the five BITS projects alone involved some 1,023 students, 57 teachers, and 46 schools. And there were about twenty other teachers and their students in the network not included in these numbers.

After an experimental linkup with the American School in Lima, Peru, at the end of this school year, it looks as though BreadNet will include international writing exchanges next year. Representatives from a London-based network will be at Bread Loaf this July to discuss possibilities for cross-cultural writing exchanges that ought to make the cowboy-Indian-preppie connection look like a family reunion.

But numbers and distances don't adequately describe BreadNet.

BreadNet is, above all, a *place* – albeit an intangible one – a community of learners and teachers defined not by an accident of geography, but by a shared commitment to creating an atmosphere that nurtures learning and writing. As Project Director Bill Wright wrote to Paul Cubeta: "I hope that somewhere among all these small bursts of electricity, we are helping people become better writers."

A rising tide of innovation: BreadNet

by William W. Wright, Jr.

Reading maketh a full man
Conference a ready man
and writing an exact man.
—Francis Bacon

The grandmother in one of James Thurber's stories "lived the latter part of her life in the horrible suspicion that electricity was dripping invisibly all over the house. It leaked, she contended, out of empty sockets if the wall switch had been left on." Bread Loaf teachers were not that suspicious of technology four summers ago when the UPS man slid boxes of Apple computers out of his truck onto the Inn porch—but almost. Many treated the gadgets as one would a foamed-at-the-mouth bull terrier. Why put your hand on the thing if you don't have to?

Now, as we move into the fifth summer of new late-paper excuses (the cat ate my floppy disk), there is a well-worn path down to the room in the bottom of the new library wing—the lab which someone (probably Paul Cubeta) dubbed the "Apple Cellar," and someone else more accurately labeled the "Apple Seller." English majors, and other people who write, like these machines simply because they make it easy to change things. They are here to stay.

But there is another way—maybe the most powerful way—to use a personal computer, and that is as a communications device. An article in the last issue of this journal told about some of those uses.

Students were "just tearing up the dictionary"

Three of the in-the-schools projects that I now work with are looking at how new technologies can help with the teaching of writing. Students do seem to write better when it is easy for them to revise. And when they know that a peer audience in London or Montana or New York will read their personal narrative, it (to loosely borrow from Dr. Johnson) concentrates the mind wonderfully. One teacher in a red-clay and textile-mill region south of here said that her students were "just tearing up the dictionary."

Technology does have the potential to help students—but I want to go on to another exciting application that that article didn't mention: a computer conference. A computer conference makes use of a central computer's ability to store, retrieve, and display information. More elaborate than electronic mail and electronic bulletin boards, computer-conference systems make it easy for a group of people in different locations to read about and comment on a topic in an on-going, sustained conference. There is also a permanent record of "conference proceedings." The best thing is that people in different time zones and people with busy schedules can communicate about an immediate issue. A group of Bread Loaf teachers has been involved in such a computer conference this year.

South Carolina Rural Writing Network Project Director Ike Coleman, who might have been driving across South Carolina all day, can come in and respond to a teacher whose morning comment came from the West Coast and another whose early evening statement was made in Cook, Minnesota. It is not like sitting around a table talking to people, cup of coffee in hand, but the closest thing that—during the school year—we can get to right now, short of jetting people back and forth.

Because a computer conference lets groups of people share ideas, it is more dynamic than one-to-one electronic-mail exchanges, and the results are sometimes greater than the sum of the parts. An idea is sparked in Ft. Wingate and added to in Pittsburgh. The important difference between this and electronic mail is that groups of people work together and continue one of the best reasons for going to Bread Loaf: they talk to each other. This sort of collegial support in sometimes lonely classrooms is important for most teachers, not just Bread Loafers.

What are these teachers talking about? Some are telling about the abysmal working conditions, the lock-step curriculum that, in some places, forces the English teacher to say things like "it is Tuesday so you must spend the hour on semicolon worksheets." But there are glimmers of light, and some are also saying that this conference—this electronic support group—helps give them the courage to go at it another year. "If you can just get through to one student…" they always tell us. Well, the conference might help one good teacher hang in there.

Among the members of BreadNet there seems to be a rising tide of innovation. We are just beginning to see the potential. We have brought in an on-line guest—a teacher who is an expert at telecomputing fielded questions from BreadNet members all over the country. We plan to bring in a *Time* magazine reporter. We have linked the Senate office of one of the presidential candidates directly to rural classrooms. There is an on-line writing workshop—student writing up for members of forty classrooms to comment on. There is an on-line reading group and a place for teachers and students simply to talk about the books that they are reading.

BreadNet has also gone international. Two teachers from the Midwest are linked up to teachers in London. The exchange of student writing has seventh graders writing more than they ever have before. Ken Holvig's class in New York is linked to Peru. The students, reading essays and letters about the poverty and terrorism in Lima know that there is life beyond the local pizza and Coke shop.

The Senate office of one of the presidential candidates [is linked] directly to rural classrooms.

Who can join the computer conference? Bread Loaf teachers (past and present) can join us. We are using a commercial telecomputing service called UNISON. You can call them at 1-800-334-6122. There is a one-time registration fee ($25-$35) and an hourly charge. Most teachers use the service at night (after 6 p.m.) and on weekends when the rate is $7 per hour. You can expect to get by on $25 per month. UNISON is giving a break to Bread Loafers in remote areas—those who have to make a toll call to hook up. People in most medium-sized and large cities can make a local telephone call—or get their computer to—and join the group.

You will need a computer, serial card, modem, modem cable, and communications software. Most people who use the Apple IIe use communications software called Point-to-Point, but you don't have to have an Apple to join us.

William W. Wright, Jr., the Project Director for BreadNet, lives in Washington, D.C.

Pollution control: Planning for productive telecomputing

by Joanne Tulonen

"Here's my writing, Tracy," says Alyssa, a first grader who is participating in a computer writing project. "Can you put it on the polluter?" The question makes us laugh, as the malapropisms of children often do, but in this first flush of widespread telecomputing, there is perhaps some wisdom in Alyssa's choice of words. The explosion of computer technology in the past decade has made many school children comfortable with such specialized jargon as "memory," "monitor," "disk drive" and "delete"; now that "modem" is becoming a familiar term as well, students are gaining access to and learning to process staggering amounts of information.

Telecomputing, the fortuitous marriage of computers and telephone lines, puts students in touch with on-line data bases such as up-to-the-minute encyclopedias, news services, financial reports, movie reviews, and magazine indexes, all of which can dramatically increase the resources of a local library. It also offers them electronic mail, a medium through which they can become creators and senders, as well as receivers, of information. This technology offers many possibilities for interesting and innovative educational applications, and probably just as many possibilities for abuse. With thoughtful planning, an electronic mail exchange can teach kids about writing and reading, community and culture, about others and about themselves. Undirected and unrestrained, it can render Alyssa's reference to the "polluter" singularly appropriate.

What then comprises a meaningful telecomputing project? The answers are varied and limited only by the imaginations of the teachers and students planning them, but in any case *planning* is the operative word. This is not to imply that spontaneity, flexibility, and even frivolity should be squeezed out of computer communications. On the contrary, the speed and immediacy of electronic mail make it the perfect medium for encompassing these characteristics.

However, since electronic mail implies at least two classrooms at separate and usually distant locations, a common understanding of the purpose and goals of the exchange and a framework in which to accomplish these goals is essential. Uses of electronic mail which have proved successful in school settings include sharing of creative writing and critical responses, sending or receiving selections for the compilation of an electronic magazine, discussions of literature read by both classes, collaborative writing, using students as consultants in areas of their expertise, and exchanging information about communities and lifestyles.

Clearly, these different applications require different designs, but any telecommunications project has three phases of planning. First, decisions must be made about hardware, software and communications services, and teachers or student operators must become comfortable with the technology. Second, teachers must consider classroom management. Since most classes will not have a computer for each student, a system must be arranged to give everyone adequate computer time and to keep off-computer students busy with meaningful classroom activities. The third phase, and the most interesting and creative part of the planning, is the content and form of the project itself. In this issue, I will discuss the first two planning phases from my own experience as coordinator of several different telecomputing projects. In the next issue, I'll talk about some of the many ways to use telecommunications in planning exciting, real opportunities for classroom writing. These plans are not offered as "recipes" or even as models, but simply as examples of how a small school in rural Montana made the Big Sky even bigger through telecomputing.

Language arts and technology

The technological aspects of computer communications can be both intimidating and frustrating, especially to such a traditionally non-technological ("Does anyone know how to run this projector?") group as English teachers. I suppose there is some irony in the fact that it was at the Bread Loaf School of English that I first became a "techie." Here, only recently did an improvement in the old and quirky wiring system lift a long-standing ban on hair driers. Yet in the summer of 1984 Bread Loaf opened its new computer room, The Apple Cellar. The school had received its computers through a grant from Apple Corporate Grants. Under the terms of this grant these computers would be placed in four schools across the country during the year, and these schools would implement a telecommunications project.

When I was asked to be a participant in this project, I was a computer neophyte. Although I had done some word processing, I had never heard of a modem, and in my mind telecommunication was some kind of arcane rite performed only by the high priests of hackerdom. It was not long, however, before I was sitting in front of a computer screen with several other similarly bewildered English teachers, waiting for Bread Loaf's telephone lines (which are even quirkier than its wiring) to connect us to the world outside our little mountain in Vermont.

Because we received our equipment and software from the grant, some of the first-phase planning decisions were made for us. We used Apple IIe computers, Apple modems, an Apple communications software package, Access II, and AppleWriter word processing. Apple arranged connect-time on a commercial electronic mail service.

Of course, there are many other options, but whatever your choice, there are six elements of a telecommunications system to consider: computer, modem, communications software, word-processing software, telecommunications service, and phone line. Because telecommunications technology is in a rapid state of change and development, this article will not attempt to recommend one brand of hardware or software over another. Instead, it will try to help you understand the functions of each of the components of the system, and to suggest some questions to ask when purchasing equipment or determining whether your existing equipment can be incorporated into a telecommunications system.

The computer

Most personal computers can be used as a telecommunications terminal. Make sure your computer has enough memory (128K is probably a minimum for language arts telecommunicating projects) and either an internal modem or a port to connect an external one. It is not necessary that your computer be the same kind as the one at the remote site, but it is important that all pieces of writing created at one site be entered on compatible machines.

The modem

This is the device which translates the material on your computer screen into a telephone signal, allowing you to send written material over phone lines. They come in a variety of prices and styles. Some are on cards which you install inside the computer and some are small box-shaped components that are connected externally. Although your modem does not have to be the same brand as your computer, you should check with your dealer about compatibility. Also consider the speed at which the modem can receive or transmit. A cheaper modem may have only a 300-baud option, which means that it will take in information at only one-fourth the speed of a 1200-baud modem. Since connect time costs money, you may save in the long run by buying a more expensive modem with 1200-baud capability. Some computers, such as the Apple IIe, will require a serial card to connect the modem, while others, such as the Apple IIc, have the necessary connection built in. Be sure to find out whether your computer will need a card, because this will be an additional expense to plan into your budget.

Communications software

Most personal computers will require some sort of communications software in order to operate as a terminal. These vary widely in price and in capability, so this may be one of the more difficult decisions. Of course, it is first essential to buy a software package that is compatible with your computer. Other important considerations are buffer size (How much information can the program can hold without stopping to save it to the disk?), and uploading/downloading capability (Can the program send a file created off-line and saved to a disk? Can it save incoming information?).

Some very simple communications programs allow the user to write only when connected on-line, which would be both expensive and impractical for classroom projects. You should choose a program that allows you to create documents with a word processor and to send those documents from the disk where they have been saved. Similarly, you should be able to save incoming information to a disk which can be read and processed with your word processor. Also consider ease of operation. Although software is getting constantly more "user-friendly," a new program can still be bewildering. Insist on a demonstration of the software from your dealer and line up a support system of people you can call for help if you need it.

Word-processing software

Most any word-processing software package will create the documents to be sent via telecommunications. However, you must make sure your word processing uses the same operating system as your telecommunications package. When we first started our project, we had DOS-based AppleWriter while our communications software, Access II, was ProDOS. This situation necessitated cumbersome and time-consuming conversions that could try the patience of any telecommunicator. If you already have word-processing software, buy a communications package with the same operating system, or plan on investing in new word-processing software too. There are some combination word-processing and telecommunications software packages on the market, so if you have not yet invested in either, you might consider one of those.

Joe C [illegible]

Teacher Ken Holvig (center), with Clarkstown South High School students Caryn Leventhal (left) and Linda Kling (right), downloads writing from BreadNet.

The service

Although it is possible to connect your computer directly to the computer with which you will be communicating, most likely you will want a service to be your "middleman." This service will have a central or "host" computer which is always ready to receive information and which stores and manages the documents you send and receive. Using it avoids the necessity of coordinating hook-up time between the two remote terminals. A service can also save on long-distance connect time, since you can contact any computer in the world which uses the same service simply by dialing the service's host. Also, in many large cities, you can do this through a local call to a packet- switching network, a service which connects you to the host without additional charge. (Well, sort of. These expenses are usually absorbed by the communications service and passed on to consumers via connect-time costs.)

Most communications services manage electronic mail, but others, like The Source, offer a variety of data bases as well. Most services have a one-time joiners' fee and then a rate structure based on time on-line (like the telephone, often cheaper during late-night hours). Investigate the connect charges for both prime and off-times and the capabilities of the service and the needs of your project before making your choice. Connect time will be the major ongoing expense in a telecommunications project, so choice of service requires careful research. Remember that, if you manage it properly, you can send and receive quite a lot of information in an hour's worth of your service's connect-time—and that you'll get better and better at squeezing the most out of your telecommunications dollar.

Phone line

Although the phone line might seem like the simplest and most familiar part of a telecommunications set-up, it could be the biggest hurdle if you plan to do your telecomputing at school. Since most schools do not have phone jacks in the classrooms, you may have to have your system on a cart which can be wheeled to the office. The first few times you do this the secretaries and principal will gather around you with great interest and probably read your incoming personal mail over your shoulder, but eventually pressure on already over-burdened school phone lines will cause them to become less tolerant. The best (and most expensive) solution is a private line into your classroom, but an extension from the existing phone system will also work.

Many teachers from the Bread Loaf projects have their computers and modems at home where only their teenaged children will complain about the amount of time they tie up the telephone lines. Another advantage of a home set-up is that you can more conveniently send and receive files during non-prime time hours when the rates are cheaper.

All these technological considerations can seem overwhelming, but spending time on them will be worth your while. Read reviews of telecommunications products in magazines. Talk to other users if possible, and get as much information as you can before making

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your purchase. This field is still new enough that salespeople in computer stores may not have the expertise to give you good advice, so if you know any technical experts, take them to lunch and pick their brains.

Setting up

Once you have made your purchases you will need to set up the equipment (which might require another techie lunch). Don't be discouraged if things don't work at first, but consider each component of the system separately. Make sure things are configured properly. Read the manuals. Your communications service might require specific settings on your software in order to make connections. Information about these settings should be in the member's packet you receive when you join, and many communications services offer telephone numbers for technical support. Don't be afraid to call them to ask for help.

And in your darkest moments, think of this image from the first year of Bread Loaf's Apple Cellar: Four English teachers with no technological training are in a room full of computer parts. Their only tools are the tiny wrenches that came packaged with the computers and a Swiss Army knife. There is much scratching of heads and gnashing of teeth, some eloquent if indelicate phraseology, and at long last, success. Alexander Graham Bell himself saying, "Watson, come here. I want you," could not have been more excited than we were at our first telecommunications connection. If we could do it, so can you.

Practicing

Once you get your system working, you must practice using it. And make sure that whomever you are going to be communicating with is practicing as well. Nothing is more devastating to a telecommunications project than to have students who are excited and enthusiastic about embarking on the exchange be stymied by technological failures. The main attraction of computer communication is its immediacy and speed. If that is negated by improperly trained operators botching the transmissions, the whole project may collapse. Teachers can use this practice time to discuss the other phases of the planning process with their partner teachers at the remote location.

Whether your partner is a beginning or experienced telecommunicator, he or she will most likely be more tolerant of your mistakes than your students are. Therefore this preproject planning serves a dual purpose. Besides clarifying the shape and scope of the exchange, it will give you a chance to become comfortable with those arcane mysteries of telecommunicating. The "teacher talk" that takes place before and during the project points up the tremendous advantage of electronic over conventional mail. Written plans, feedback, and revisions can be exchanged within days or even minutes, without frustrating delays.

Classroom management

The second phase of planning, classroom management, is far less intimidating than the technological part. In fact, elementary teachers, who often juggle small groups of small children all day long, will probably shrug their shoulders and say, "What's the problem?" High-school teachers also may be accustomed to having their students work in groups, but those who generally do all-class activities will have to make some adjustments. When I taught in tiny Wilsall, Montana, I had four computers in my room, courtesy of Bread Loaf and Apple Corporate Grants, and my largest class was thirteen students. Therefore, I had a pretty good computer/student ratio, but I still had to arrange computer time when we were in the midst of a telecommunications project.

Some of our activities had steps that didn't require computers, such as interviewing a fellow student before preparing an introductory character sketch. This makes classroom management easy. One group can be interviewing, another entering their character sketches or composing them at the computer, while a third is revising and editing hard copy of what they have already entered. There were days when my classroom was a Luddite's nightmare: Students who had taped interviews with their partners sat at the computers with headphones plugged into tape recorders while they transcribed or paraphrased tapes. Of course, interviewing, writing, and revising are sequential tasks, so I had to prepare other activities, sometimes unrelated to the project, for groups to do after they finished editing or before they started interviewing.

Other activities in our project were not divisible into three such convenient steps. For example, exchanging personal letters usually required just one class period at the computer without a formal pre-writing or post-writing activity. During the letter-writing phase of a project, I had one group of high-school sophomores at the computers, another doing a vocabulary exercise, while a third sat with me to read from and discuss *Julius Caesar*. We rotated the groups so that within three days all the students had completed all three assignments. (A larger class would, of course, require more groups, more days for everyone to finish the work, and more ingenuity on the part of the teacher.) Absenteeism or assignments not completed in the allotted time created additional scheduling problems. However, because computers and telecommunications still have an air of novelty about them, and because the writing the students were doing had a real purpose, they were willing to come after school or during a study hall to complete their work.

Another way to deal with the fact that schools usually do not have a computer for every student is to turn this "problem" into a positive collaborative learning situation. Students might work in small groups, pooling their knowledge and points of view, wrestling with decisions about what to include and what to omit, and finding out about the dynamics of working with others in the process. Students who are involved in collaborative projects learn to value their own knowledge and also that of their classmates. Often they discover things about each other that years of sitting at the neighboring desk could not have told them. In fact, group projects that involve uploading just a few pieces of collaborative writing, instead of twenty-five individual pieces, are better for the teachers, too.

Once you have made it through the technological and administrative phases of your planning, it is time for the most interesting and important part: the design of the project itself. If you have been asking yourself, as I did, why on earth you would want to invest the time and energy to learn about telecommunications and deal with its sometimes frustrating vagaries, your question may be answered when you begin to think about ways this technology might be helpful to your students. In the next issue of *Bread Loaf and the Schools*, I will describe some of the projects that my students and those of other BreadNetting teachers have found exciting. In the meantime, talk to the computer teacher at your school and ask if there is a modem moldering in a closet somewhere. If you can get it out of the closet and into your classroom, you will be taking your first big step toward telecommunicating. ❑

Joanne Tulonen teaches at Kearsarge Regional High School in New London, New Hampshire.

Beyond pen pals

by Bill Durbin, with Ken Holvig

"Workshop" is one example of the possibilities of Bread Loaf's teacher-student telecommunications network, "BreadNet." To find out more about the nuts and bolts, as well as the potential payoffs, of telecommunications in the classroom, see Joanne Tulonen's "Pollution control" in this issue. Bread Loafers interested in joining Workshop should contact Bill Durbin (Lake Vermilion, Cook, MN 55723). To find out more about BreadNet, write to Bill Wright, in care of the Bread Loaf Office, Tilden House, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont 05753.

The most exciting portion of our word-processing work this year involved the introduction of "Workshop" to the BreadNet computer network. With coordinator Bill Wright's help, Workshop became a BreadNet subconference that gave us the capacity to share student writing simultaneously with all the schools on BreadNet. Students who posted work received responses from other students on the network. Time was then allotted for rebuttals, defenses, and requests for clarification.

At first, comments were limited to student interchanges, but following the encouragement of Bread Loaf Director Paul Cubeta, responses soon came to include any combination of student/teacher/student reactions. Compliments, questions, criticisms, and requests for expansion and elaboration were soon humming back and forth across the wires. Teachers were now using the network not only to talk "teacher talk" to their colleagues, but also to discuss writing with student authors who had suddenly become experimental members of an extended and ever-evolving electronic classroom.

The teachers who participated this year represented the urban/rural, north/south, east/west range of BreadNet: Ken Holvig and Ray Roswell of Clarkstown High in New City, New York; Bill Durbin of Cook High in Cook, Minnesota; John Forsyth of Wilsall High in Wilsall, Montana; and Ken Leupold of Deming High in Deming, New Mexico. The students involved were highly motivated by the immediacy of this process, and were excited (though at times a bit intimidated) by having an audience that not only was real but could "fight back." Teachers were impressed by the fact that student responses tended to be more enthusiastic and vital than the guarded comments that so often characterize peer reactions within the classroom. The interactive nature of Workshop insured that kids' writing would not only be given a close analytical reading but also that the authors would receive specific suggestions for revisions.

Even though the students were excited by the opportunity to react to the writing of their peers, we soon discovered some of the dangers in long-distance analysis. After a first round of rather cautious, praising comments, the fireworks began when some Montana students mounted a general assault on the baseball knowledge of an ardent New York fan. The gentle Montana ranchers were soon being accused of limiting their cultural pursuits to "pig wrestling." These outraged flurries were soon followed by a young (though not so innocent) Minnesotan's suggestion that a certain New Yorker "take up knitting" until he could send him some "decent" writing.

Our students were suddenly faced with the eternal problem of the critic: how do we leave our prejudices and preconceived stereotypes aside and approach the work with sensibility and intelligence? Though much of this exchange was only good-natured teasing, some egos were wounded in the process. We tried to sensitize kids to the fact that ironic comments can be easily misinterpreted—especially in print. From that point forward, we all agreed to balance our criticism with positive commentary, and we tried to foster a supportive atmosphere that encouraged kids to take creative risks in their writing.

And kids were learning how to read a text closely and how to write constructive, helpful criticism. In response to John's essay on baseball, Gwenn wrote:

> Your theme is not clear. Opening statement is a fragment; end statement does not sum up your view clearly. You need to focus your comments around a central idea. Check word choice.... Should you expand idea about Jackie Robinson? Are your statistics accurate? State your source.

Amy wrote about the same article:

> I'm not clear on what you're getting at here. I don't quite understand the main point. Are you upset that baseball players make so much money or do you admire them? I am confused when you mix your admiration for the game with what appears to be harsh criticism. This could be clarified and it would set up a positive contrast. I do like the comparison between watching your team and the Olympics. The closing paragraph is strong but you need more logical support for this premise in the rest of your essay. Maybe you could have answered the questions you began in the first paragraph—it might clarify your position that way. A lot of misspellings.

Teacher Ken Holvig wrote about the responses to the baseball article: "Wow. I've graded thousands of essays in my years of teaching and I don't think I could have said it better. John will definitely incorporate some of the specific suggestions he received from these peer editors as he works on another draft of his essay." John, however, had the last word:

> Dear Workshoppers,
>
> Hello, this is your friend John. Now I know you guys had a field day with my essay. My first reaction was anger. Fortunately I'm not the kind of person who tries to impress my friends by being insulting, but that's me.... This essay was my feeling toward the game, a game which I've been playing for many years. It's also a game that is going to help me through college. I plan on attending St. John's on a scholarship. Now, if baseball stirs up this kind of emotion in me do not knock it.... Today over the wires I received an excellent example of constructive criticism. It was offered by Amy, and many of the things she pointed out I took note of. This is the type of logical and helpful approach this network can provide. Amy's comments were aimed at helping me improve my piece. That's what this project is all about.

Since we experimented with Workshop for only about three months, and since participation was limited to only four sites, at this point it is dangerous to offer anything but tentative conclusions. However, as modest as our experiment was, the students and teachers involved were unanimous in voicing their support of the concept. Kids have always been highly motivated to write for their peers, but it appears that as their peer audience increases in geographic and cultural breadth, that motivation increases.

This brings us to some of the many questions that Workshop generated. If the first step in research is posing questions worthy of serious inquiry, then Workshop has provided us with a wealth of potential research material. Though it began as a forum for students to share writing, Workshop immediately confronted us with an imposing array of questions. Some of the following were posed by students, some by participating teachers, and some by Paul Cubeta. As Workshop is refined through the course of the next school year, I suspect that we may move toward answers for many of these questions.

- Do students criticize the writing of strangers more harshly than the work of their friends? (Ken Holvig initially noticed that his students seemed much more willing to criticize work from other schools than their own. Perhaps we look harder at the writing because in this sort of electronic forum that's all we have before us—no face, fancy clothes, friends, and complicated adolescent associations to distract. The work has to stand on its merits.)

- To what extent do students' cultural backgrounds influence both the way they write and the way they respond to their peers? (It was fascinating to see how clearly the region dominated the imagery of students. With New Mexican kids there was the ever-present sense of the desert and of open space, while the New Yorkers, though they were suburban, were preoccupied with "the City.")

- What does this sort of distant peer response teach kids about other people? Other places? Themselves?

- Does this sort of format change the way kids write about writing? (Though much of the analysis was fragmentary and brief, we have already seen several instances where student responses have taken the form of spin-off pieces nearly as detailed as the original. For example, John Forsyth posted a student's description of a recurrent dream sequence which elicited several similar stories, and one of Ken Leupold's students wrote an essay that inspired a Minnesotan to write about his love of the rodeo.)

- Does Workshop change the way kids think about writing? Does it help them articulate and clarify stylistic preferences?

- What are the dangers in being too kind or too cruel in one's criticism?

- To what extent do the content, genre, and style of a piece dictate the response?

- Should student critics approach first drafts differently than they do finished pieces?

We would appreciate suggestions from other BreadNetters about Workshop. Our first priority is to recruit some new voices. Anyone who would like to post some student work is welcome. Early this fall we will be setting up a schedule so that everyone can plan on specific blocks of time. If we have more people involved our responses should be richer and more divergent.

For 1988-89, we have considered exploring several alternatives, including collective reactions to a theme or themes, devoting portions of the year to different genres, inviting a professional writer as an on-line guest analyst, and breaking into two or more smaller conferences based on age or interest. Since we focused mainly on essays and stories last year we may want to encourage students to explore some other forms. We could even alternate poetry, drama, short stories, essays, and so forth. We have also discussed setting up different sub-conferences for junior high and senior high students so the young ones could get more line time—but that might limit those cross-age reactions that can be so illuminating. ❑

WORK IN PROGRESS

The New York-Peru connection: A student's perspective

by Michael Schneider

I have always admired the work of international diplomats. It is an awesome responsibility to represent a nation of people and to receive open criticism for one's actions. Working with people from different cultures to give the impression of friendliness while actively defending what your country stands for is very difficult. In a way, I felt like an international diplomat during the telecommunications exchanges we held in my writing class.

My class, in West Nyack, N.Y., and a similar class from Lima, Peru, agreed to exchange letters on pertinent topics. We discussed everything from international drug-trafficking to junk food, politics to our school work loads. Some of the comments were sympathetic and some were quite scathing. Eventually we all found ourselves being quite defensive about our way of life. I'm sure our Peruvian friends felt the same way. Both sides found unpleasant things about the other. Many here were quite upset when we had to admit the painfully large drug problem in the United States. In Peru, they seemed just as upset about admitting the ineptitude of their government to combat the frequent terrorist attacks. It was an eye-opening experience.

We had questions like:

> ...Our societies are so different mainly because of the political differences. Our government evolves around basic civil rights which are protected by the Constitution. What are the political conditions of your country? Do you feel your rights are protected by your government? Is your government a democracy or is it, as we hear, turning into a socialistic government?

They often returned with points like:

> ...I would like to clarify something. Peru is not a dangerous country. All the junk you hear about Peru is, in most cases, false. You hear that the terrorists do what they want to, and that the police are inefficient. Terrorism is not as devastating as they say it is. A few people can make a lot of noise, and that is what's happening here. As I told Todd, almost all terrorism takes place in the interior of Peru. A minimum takes place in Lima, where we live. Terrorists do not attack civilians; they do not act indiscriminately, as in other countries. In the United States, you also have terrorism, like the Omega 7, which was qualified as "probably the most dangerous terrorist group currently functioning in the U.S." by a high FBI officer in the book *The Terrorists* written by C. Dobson and R. Payne. You also have people that go into supermarkets, malls, and restaurants and start shooting people....

I must admit that I had the wrong attitude initially. I approached the exchange thinking that I would easily deny any misconceptions they had and show them how wrong they were. It wasn't long before I realized that they had many valid arguments and that quite a few of mine didn't stand up as well as I thought they would. Again, I sensed that they felt similarly, and we both learned a valuable lesson. Both countries are imperfect. We both have serious faults. Once we admitted that fact to ourselves and each other the exchange ran a lot smoother.

Unfortunately, due to the length of our course (one semester) and of their summer vacation (December 12-the end of February) we could only have a few exchanges before our courses ended. I wish we could have continued. In fact, many people in our group exchanged addresses with the Peruvians and are carrying on the exchange on a one-to-one basis. I learned a lot about Latin America, quite a lot more than I could pick up from the news. I think that I learned just as much about my own country. I wasn't aware of the gross injustices going on in the U.S. and the exchange made me focus on such problems. I am grateful to have been given such an opportunity and look forward to personally continuing it. —

Michael Schneider is a student at Clarkstown South High School, in West Nyack, N.Y., and a participant in Ken Holvig's Bread Loaf in the Schools project.

Writing with reservations: The Native American Network

by Bill Noll

Excerpt of a letter from McGrath, Alaska, to St. Francis, South Dakota:

> Dear Ethan,
>
> I read your essay on "How to live on the reservation" and it was good. I like how you call the reservation, "The Res." It's like in Alaska.... We call villages "The Bush"....
>
> —*Brooke*

Essays and letters like these scrolled across the screens of computers on "The Res," in "The Bush," and in Washington, D.C., this year as the Native American Network was introduced on BreadNet. While eleven Bread Loaf teachers from primarily the West and Alaska discussed their teaching and issues in Native American education on the "NA" conference, their students exchanged essays and letters in a branch of the conference called "NATalk."

Sometimes the two conferences intersected. "Dolly" (not her real name), from St. Francis Indian School on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota and student of Cathy Harris, posted some very moving, personal pieces on NATalk about having a baby and growing up in an alcoholic home. The following is used with her permission:

> My Child
>
> When I found out I was pregnant with my baby, I was already three months along. I didn't know what to do. I felt like crying, and I wanted to kill myself.
>
> Before I went into the hospital to check if I was pregnant, I had all the symptoms that I was. One day when I went to school I didn't know, but something happened to make me pretty sure. I ate breakfast with my brother. I wasn't feeling to good, but I ate. When we were done eating, we left the dining room. I went and threw it all back up. My brother freaked out on me. He told me to go to the nurse, so I did. All she did was give me some pills and tell me to lie down. I felt a little better at noon. When I was having the symptoms, I went and tried to overdose myself. It didn't work out, and I went in for tests later on. I found out I was. So here I was, carrying a human inside of me. I went in to the clinic with my sister at the time I found out I was pregnant. I really hated to tell my mother because I thought she was going to hit me or beat me up. But, when we got home I told her right away. She just asked me, "How many months?" and "Who's the father?" I told her.
>
> I felt the baby move inside of me for the first time on June 13th, '87. I was kind of scared at first, but my older sister told me that it was telling me that it was inside and alive. After that, the baby moved a lot, mostly in the evening.
>
> I didn't have a hard time having him, because I did what I was told to do. I had my son on October 31, and he was the most beautiful baby I have ever seen. I had been planning on giving him away because I knew I wasn't ready to raise a baby myself, but after I saw him, I hated to let him go. I came home afterwards, and my mother helped me take good care of him. I didn't know anything about having and raising a baby. She told me everything. I learned a lot from my mother. On the 4th of July he learned how to crawl. I was surprised. And about Christmas time he learned how to walk. He learns pretty fast. Right now he is growing up really fast and is more beautiful all the time.

From another "Dolly" essay:

> First of all, my parents were alcoholics. When I was growing up, I lived a horrible life. My mother always left us home. She never came home until we would go looking for her. When we did find her, she would always be beaten up, dirty, or drunk. I thought she had a bad influence on us kids. She hardly ever bought food for us. She spent our checks on booze. There would always be a lot of winos in our house, especially a lot of men we didn't even know....
>
> Now that I am eighteen years old and have a child of my own, I feel angry at my mother for doing all those things to me and my brothers and sisters. I won't do the same way my mama did to me. I am trying to raise my baby better than they raised me.

Dolly's work is not characteristic of all the writing found on NATalk; hers was more personal. There were poems and descriptive essays from Deane O'Dell's students in McGrath, Alaska; a fictional piece, "Grandpa Wins the Lottery," among others, from Gary Griffith's Navajo students in Page, Arizona; descriptive essays about life on the reservation and school life from my Sioux students in Kyle, South Dakota; the letters of response from these schools, and Lucy Maddox's Native American Literature students at Georgetown University.

Because Dolly's writing was posted in May, there wasn't much time for other students to respond. A few students from my class sent her letters with their home addresses since it was too late for her to reply by E-mail. The most exciting piece of mail Dolly received, according to Cathy Harris, was Lucy Maddox's encouraging response (Maddox's class ended before Dolly posted the pieces):

> To "Dolly":
>
> The writing you let us see was very powerful, especially the piece called "My Child" and the one about your parents. I think you are a very brave and strong woman, and I also think you are a strong writer. I hope you will write some more about your life and about your baby (what is his name?) and that you will share some more of it with us.
>
> I once tried to write my autobiography—the story of my whole life so far.... I wrote 20 or 30 pages and then stopped to read what I had written, and I didn't like it at all. It didn't seem honest. I had tried too hard, I think, to make it all come out sounding good.... What impresses me about the writing you did is that every word seems honest; you care about telling the truth, rather than about making these stories about yourself sound good. I think that's what makes your writing so powerful—all of your words MEAN something, and nothing is wasted—and what makes it much better than the writing I produced.
>
> I'm going to go back to my own autobiography project soon, now that I've learned things about writing from people like you.... I hope you will write more. I would like to read more so that I can learn more—about you and about writing.

Dolly's situation is not characteristic of life on the reservation for all people. Some writing on NATalk celebrated the land, culture and activities which can make growing up on the reservation enjoyable. But Dolly was not the only person to write about alcoholism, and it is unfortunately true that life can sometimes be rough on the reservations where some counties rank as the poorest in the U.S.

Some Native American Network members (left to right): Marsha West, Cathy Harris, Michele Barger, Bill Noll, Eileen Clark, Deane O'Dell, Dennis Lenssen, Candace Ottertail Woman, Ardith Maddoux, Gary Griffith, Sarah Reeve.

Essays on NATalk provided another dimension for students in Maddox's class at Georgetown, as evidenced by some of their reflections on the class:

> ...I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to read the letters from the high school students. They helped me put the fiction in perspective and to realize that the heroes of *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony* and *Winter in the Blood* are not so far removed from recent Indian experience as I had believed. The alcoholism, the violence, confusion, desire to leave the reservation and "assimilate," through college or the military—all of these things that frustrated me in the novels are much easier to understand with the added viewpoints of the students.

> I have been genuinely impressed through this literature in combination with the compositions received through the computer that Indians are alive and have daily lives. Native American kids join ROTC, pull paring knives on each other, watch Charles Smith (of Georgetown) play basketball on TV.

We can see what NATalk had to offer our students, in Washington, in the bush, and on the res. Their classrooms were no longer limited geographically, and students had a writing audience beyond their teachers. Dolly wasn't ready yet to share her personal writing with her classmates, but she felt no qualms about posting it on NA for others to read, or being quoted in articles. Computer communication has a way of bringing people together while allowing them to keep a safe distance, thus providing an opportunity for perhaps some of the best "expressive" and candid writing. Teacher Cathy Harris credits her study with James Britton and Michael Armstrong at Bread Loaf with informing her year of teaching writing at St. Francis.

What's the value of such a specialized network for teachers? On "NA" we discussed some of the same issues the students did about reservation life, from our perspectives as teachers. Did we gripe about our situations? A little, but not much. At times we cannot help but feel some frustrations developing out of our situations with some administrations, student attitudes and community issues. The same with any school, really. But I have always believed, as I feel many teachers of Native Americans do, that the highs we get from teaching are somehow higher than in a "typical" school system. That also means the lows can be lower.

One teacher-participant wrote:

> In three years I have worked under three different principals. None of them really wanted to be [here] but were out to prove themselves to the district in order to be moved to one of the white schools. Obviously the students and teachers are robbed of any continuity. The district does not respect or really concern itself with the unique needs and strengths of our school. Outside of showing an interest in the basketball scores [those] in the district office try to forget us. After all, we are the ones who pull down their SAT scores.

Another responded to a similar message with this:

> ...about your apology for venting your frustrations on this network. Seems to me this is the most appropriate place to vent them; if not here, then where? Surely the other folks know what you mean and have had the same kinds of frustrations. Say more, not less.

Most of our talk, though, focused on the issue of teaching and where we can make the most difference—in our individual classrooms, as Dennis Lenssen, teacher of Yu'pik Eskimos in Alaska's Yukon area candidly pointed out:

> I found the only way to survive in the village was to point my nose in the direction of the classroom and keep it there. I did not want to even know about village politics, and don't tell me about a kid having problems in another teacher's class. I could not do anything about all those other problems. The only place I have any power to do anything is in that school.

We talked about dialects and teaching writing, book suggestions for Native American literature in the classroom, and the place of Native American literature in our curricula.

The topic which raised perhaps the most hackles was about who should be teaching Native American literature. Lucy Maddox spoke in April at a conference called "Women in America: Legacies of Race and Ethnicity":

> I tried to be cautious, emphasizing my awareness of the problems of a WASP like me teaching Indian lit. Still, in the discussion session, several people told me I shouldn't be doing it. I was discouraged, a little depressed, until the next day when I had a long conversation with an Osage (Indian) woman who had been at the session. She encouraged me to keep doing it. That helped my mood and my confidence considerably, but reminded me of the tricky position we are in, as non-Indians teaching Indian lit or Indian students.

Hugh Coyle, Administrative Assistant in the Bread Loaf office, plans to teach the course "The Native American Tradition" at Middlebury College. He responded:

> What concerns me (and seems obvious) is the underlying feeling that only Native Americans can teach Native American literature in a meaningful or legitimate way. I know we don't all agree with that or we wouldn't be teaching the literature, but if we expand the feelings surrounding that statement to include

> such thoughts as "Only Black teachers should teach Black literature" or "Only women should teach women authors," it becomes clear how limiting such ideas can be.
>
> Thanks to the NA conference, the course I'll be teaching has changed shape constantly and is no longer a "Native American literature" course as such.... I aim to map out the place of Native culture in our own society: How the New Agers have (mis)appropriated it, how the literary circles have focused on it and why, and how it is seen in Native circles themselves. This allows us to treat ourselves to some great literature, but in a way which turns the mirror a little more toward us as readers of that literature.

Other issues created themselves in a hurry. The effect of a sense of community ownership in schools became a real issue when we learned participant Michele Barger's school (forty percent Native American population on the Skokomish Reservation in Washington State) was struck by arsonists:

> The four arsonists were Native American and because our school was on the reservation, racism is once again out in the open. Pressure is being put on board members and the superintendent to rebuild in a new location. These people don't see that moving a school does not mean the end of vandalism.

Dennis Lenssen offered support and concurred:

> The leaders of the Native American community [have] to pitch right in and get involved in the decision-making process. If the decision goes in their favor, the community will feel they have more of a stake in that school.

We also talked of the elusive, fluid concept of "culture." Were we replacing one culture with another through our teaching, or—as we would like to believe—giving people the skills necessary to help their culture survive, evolve, and defend itself from further encroachment which is usually carried on in an arena where English is the language of argument and arbitration?

We talked about trying to make our writing on the network, and the students' writing, available to others through publication. We identified some strengths in our systems, many of us teaching in K-12 schools. This situation easily lends itself to cross-age tutoring projects, such as Sarah Reeve's on the Duck Valley Reservation on the Nevada/Idaho border. Her high-school students jointly produce a poetry publication with a fourth-grade class.

The same isolation which made the network desirable also worked against us. People live far from computer stores where they can seek parts and technical assistance, and party phone lines had to be switched to private ones. Telecommunication was new to most of the eleven members of the network; the software problems had to be worked out, and school systems were not always supportive.

But the payoff made the problems bearable. This interaction, as with other teacher computer conferences, helped lift the sense of isolation for many on the network and added a feeling of support where for some there are very few opportunities for discussion within the profession. But it was the specialization of the conference, the commitment to the education of Native Americans and teaching Native American literature, that flavored the topics and allowed core issues to emerge from the informality of computer conference "talk." ❑

Bill Noll heads up the Native American Network, and teaches English at Little Wound School, in Kyle, South Dakota.

"Sundance at Crowdog's Paradise"

by Lucy Maddox

When we were first getting the Native American network cranked up, one of the teachers commented in her first note that she hoped to be able to give her students a "wider vision" through her (and their) participation in the network.

"Vision" is one of those words that has been so overused and misused that its meaning has unfortunately gotten very soft. However, it is exactly the word I want to use here; one could say that "wider vision" is an important aim of all education, and I can say that "wider vision" is very definitely what the NA network was all about for me, for my students at Georgetown University, and I think for others on the network.

My E-mail conversations with the other teachers were different—refreshingly different—from the ones I generally have with my university colleagues; they helped to keep me reminded that I am part of a community of teachers, sharing interests, ambitions, and frustrations with others who teach in circumstances very different from my own. Our conversations addressed issues that are, I think, both tougher and more important than the matters I usually discuss with colleagues.

We talked, for example, about the personal and political implications of the fact that we are all Anglos, either teaching Native American students or teaching Native American literature to other Anglos. We expressed our anxieties, our fears about whether we were imposing values on our students (or on a literature) and therefore contributing to a process of cultural imperialism. We talked about the complex relationship between "wider vision" and the erasing of traditional values and ways of living. We talked about local dialects and dominant languages, and the responsibility of the teacher of writing. We talked about humor—what our students found funny and what they didn't.

We also talked about books, recommending things we had read and found useful or things we had taught with some success. And we asked each other lots of questions: about all of these issues, about our students, our schools, our communities.

Once we had overcome our computer anxieties, Bill Noll suggested that we set up a sub-conference called NATalk, on which we could post student writing and arrange some exchanges among students at the various schools. Like the Native American network, NATalk started slowly and tentatively, but once the ice was broken, we were all filling disks with some of the most engaging and interesting student writing I've read in a long time.

I had intended all along to print out some of the student writing to give to my students, but I had planned to be judicious in my selections so that we didn't sacrifice too much valuable class time to reading this writing and responding to it. I think I saw this project as a sort of field trip that we could accomplish without ever leaving our Georgetown classroom. But as the writing began to come in, I found that I couldn't resist printing out practically everything and depleting my photocopying budget for the year by providing copies for all twenty-three students in my class.

The reaction of my students was, if anything, even more enthusiastic than my own. They wrote messages back, and they constantly asked if anything else had come through: First they asked if I had heard from Little Wound or McGrath or St. Francis, and then they began asking if we had heard from Penny or Nathan or Darren. They and I learned many things from these students: We learned about the Sundance at Crowdog's Paradise; about Nigaleena, the big-foot woman; about the dancing competitions at the Rosebud Fair; about alcoholism on the reservations; about knife-fights in the laundromat; about the extraordinary difficulty of deciding whether or not to stay on the reservation after high-school graduation.

These pieces of writing accomplished more than I ever could have to make the Native American literature they were reading come alive for my students: Suddenly, Momaday and Silko and Geiogamah weren't so alien and exotic, so much the representatives of a distant and vanishing culture; they were only writing about the same things that Penny and Nathan and Darren were writing about.

There is one other thing I learned from the writing on NATalk, something that I hope my students also learned. This lesson is harder to define, since I think it has to do with the high-school students' sense of themselves as writers, but what I kept seeing there was an honesty and a willingness to take risks that I seldom see in the writing of my university students or, for that matter, in my own writing or that of my colleagues. These students talked about themselves and their communities without reticence or artifice—and it was usually powerful writing. I always wanted to read more. And they were willing to send it out to strangers, like me, whom they had never met. Those of us who are interested in writing, and who write ourselves, are always looking for models, whether we do it consciously or not. I have recently added some to my list: Penny and Nathan and Darren are among them. For this, I am grateful to them and to their teachers.

My experience with the NA network was exciting and genuinely radical; as a result of it, I think I have changed as a teacher, as a reader, and as a writer. And I know I now have a wider vision. ❑

See "Mentors" in this issue for more on Lucy Maddox.

BREADNET

If telecommunications are candy, just say no

by Lucy Wollin

An urban English teacher, burnt out and discouraged, lights up, with some doubts, when the telecommunications system, BreadNet, is explained to her by the school librarian. The offer is made, accepted, and she gets her kids excited and ready to work. They write their first pieces, send them out to a teacher in the Midwest who has asked for the linkup, and wait. And wait. And wait. *One down.*

An exchange is set up between a class in the South and a class in New York City. Both teachers have said they are definitely committed to the project. The New York teacher wants to do a project about literature; the teacher in the South wants to do a project about community description. Both say they will change; both decide they won't. *Two down.*

An exchange is set up between a class in New York and a class out West. It goes along very well for a term, but a new teacher gets the New York class and informs them that unless they do a rap tape for the class out West, they will fail English. The exchange is dead.

It was to talk about these and other examples of problems which come up in "parenting" exchanges that South Carolina Rural Writing Network Coordinator Ike Coleman and I got together during his visit to Bread Loaf in July. We agreed that we enjoyed helping teachers link up classrooms in telecommunications exchanges and watching as good work got done; we also agreed that there were a number of problems which need addressing to improve the smooth flow of exchanges.

Among the difficulties we discussed, one of them is a paradoxical problem. The teachers who are the most interested in getting involved in new ideas and exchanges are the ones who are most interested in *everything*. That is to say, the teachers who leap into new projects with both feet are often those who then become the most overextended, overcommitted and, ultimately, most frustrated of the group. They will with the best intentions in the world stretch themselves beyond the limit.

Something has to give and something always does—usually an exchange to which they have committed themselves. It seems like candy, so it seems expendable—it can be abandoned more easily than other parts of their job. Almost everyone is involved in magazines, newspapers, yearbooks; some also run the school play and the school dance to raise money for the play which is to raise money for the yearbook! And almost everyone has to deal with state competency requirements of one sort or another, usually measured by standardized tests.

But what happens to the cases we spoke of at the beginning of this article? What happens the next time anyone tries to mention anything new to that burned-out teacher disappointed by the guy in the Midwest? What happens to her class when she or another teacher wants to get them enthusiastic about another great idea? To quote the most overquoted quote of the decade, if you seem to be taking on too much, just say *no*. If an exchange is abandoned after the kids and teachers have committed time, energy and, often, hope to it, a lot of damage is done.

If the teacher in Manhattan is too devoted to a project to try something different, if his former exchange partner is too involved to try a new approach instead of replicating last year's success, how can their kids develop an exchange which will stretch *them?*

And, people setting up exchanges who are not careful about the teachers they invite to participate may find themselves wishing they hadn't. It is important that the involved teachers share a common philosophy of teaching—and teaching writing. Trying to accommodate two radically different views of teaching writing will only frustrate teachers and students.

One of the most important factors missing in many exchanges is an awareness of each other's particular situations. Participating teachers need to be willing to communicate with each other at the very beginning about their unique difficulties. This will become more important as the network opens out to include more people who have not been together at Bread Loaf. But even those who do know each other need to make their own situations clear. Time frames for exchanges are determined to some degree by the year's schedule at the sites. Lucy, for instance, is in a city where classes change every September and February, necessitating short, rapid exchanges. In Tom's case, the class stays the same for a year, allowing for a more relaxed pace.

When we open up our classrooms to others, we open up the possibilities for our students as learners, and for ourselves as teachers and learners. We also make a commitment. Such an awareness is crucial as telecommunications and other forms of communication become more widespread in and between schools. ☐

Lucy Wollin is a librarian at Fiorello La Guardia High School of the Arts, in New York City.

Touching the world

BreadNetters,
Some of us will be part of a project that will plan another "World Class" (discussion of environmental issues) that will take place around March, 1990—to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day (April 22nd). I will talk to Senator Al Gore's office on Monday to see if the Senator can be one of the online guests (he has been outspoken in this area). We would probably accept questions from students over a four-or five-day period (maybe five questions from each class), take them over, ask the questions (and tape them) and then upload them to the conference. If mid-March is bad for your class, please let me know.
Bill Wright

In this recent message, BreadNet Director Bill Wright is offering a rare opportunity to classrooms participating this year in the BreadNet telecommunications subconference, "World Class." In 1988-89, BreadNet offered a conference to explore the issues surrounding the destruction of the tropical rain forest. Students from around this country and from South America wrote and debated those issues in a conference that took them far beyond their classroom walls. Kentucky teacher Carol Stumbo commented:

> Some of the students that I teach in my journalism class at Wheelwright High School have never been more than a few miles from the former coal camp where they have grown up. Many of them feel that the world views them as "hillbillies," and they are bothered by that. Last year, some of them got to touch the world through the World Class conference that was held on BreadNet and it changed them in a way that no amount of talk or reading in a textbook could have.
>
> I remember the afternoon that one of my students downloaded a group of essays from South America about the environment. She read them without stopping and in a matter of a few minutes, she was pleading for the time to respond to one of the essays. Nothing that I had done in my class up to that point had ever engaged her as much as that one piece of writing had. Did it matter that the catalyst had come from hundreds of miles away? Yes and no.
>
> In many ways, Brazil and Chile and Peru became real places for my students in a way that they had not been before. Certainly, writing to students in New York, North Carolina, and Peru and having those students respond was a positive experience. It helped destroy the feeling that some of the kids get in the hills here—that they are closed in and always will be. It was important to me, as a teacher, that they saw through the sharing of their writings that they could hold their own, make a contribution to a discussion with students from around this country. A student from Chile became another voice in a discussion that they cared a great deal about. The World Class conference was also a great deal of fun.

Since BreadNet began a few years ago, users have been exploring how best to use telecommunications in school, in configurations that schools will be able to afford and to manage logistically. Students and teachers in the U.S. and abroad have tried all kinds of writing exchanges, from one-to-one to group collaborations, from personal letters to essays about regions. They have participated in classroom exchanges, in a student-writing workshop called "Workshop," in a cultural information exchange called "World Trade," and in the "World Class" environmental conference.

And they have learned a lot. For example, because classrooms do not have stable populations and because it is easier and cheaper to send a few messages rather than many, Director Bill Wright and most BreadNet teachers recommend setting up several groups of about five students to work collaboratively on a few pieces of writing to send to another class, rather than pairing up students in different classrooms for lots of one-to-one exchanges.

Wright also found that it was possible to have too much of a good thing. It costs money to send and receive messages on telecommunications networks, yet enthusiastic students often wrote pages and pages to send to their partner classroom or conference. He said, "In talking with Judy Eber at the International Symposium on Telecommunication held in Jerusalem this August, she said that she had had to stop reading the various BreadNet subconferences because it was costing too much to download the long notes. I later talked with Connie Stout, who heads the network of schools in Texas. We all thought that a guideline of five pages per school per week would work best in these interactive exercises like 'Workshop.'"

Another thing Wright learned at the conference is that "The number of overseas telecommunications projects is astounding. After my talk about what we are doing on BreadNet, at least ten people, from the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and so on, asked for more information on our project."

Some of Wright's goals for BreadNet this year include getting more overseas schools online, finding cheaper ways to link the South American schools, expanding participation with other telecommunications resource people, and getting the word out more widely about what BreadNet teachers and students are learning about telecommunications in the classroom. ❑

Online with an expert: a World Class interview

Last November, BreadNet sponsored a second World Class computer conference on the environment. Teachers and students prepared for the conference by reading articles in Newsweek*, July 24, an issue devoted to environmental concerns. Bill Wright took students' questions that had been posted on the network to Rick Adcock, a senior Legislative Assistant on global environmental issues to U.S. Senator Albert Gore, Jr. Before joining Senator Gore's staff, Rick Adcock worked on global environmental policy analysis with the Office of Technology Assessment and the World Resources Institute. He has degrees in chemical engineering and English.*

BW: *Bill McKibben suggested in his article, "The End of Nature," in the September issue of* The New Yorker *that even if we do as much as we can about global warming, we cannot reverse the changes that will take place. How drastic is the problem?*

RA: I think that we are still talking about prevention. We have loaded enough into the system in the form of greenhouse gases and ozone-depleting chemicals that there will be some effect. And the nature of this problem is such that it will not manifest itself for decades after the pollutants are emitted. So we won't know fully what we have done to the environment as of today—for perhaps a decade, maybe longer.

There are things that we should start today that make sense for many reasons. Energy efficiency is something that will help not only global warming but also our national security and our trade balance. Measures should be implemented now to cut down on the impact that will be felt tomorrow. It's not a gloom and doom scenario as others may imply. There is room for hope, and there is room to think that people working together can achieve results.

BW: *A student from Lima, Peru, wants to know how other countries are getting involved in saving the ozone layer.*

RA: We saw last spring that many European nations announced that they would phase out some of the most damaging chlorofluorocarbons by the year 2000. Prime Minister Thatcher held a conference last March to highlight the ozone depletion problem and pledged that Great Britain would fully support such a phaseout. This was of great significance because she is a major politician who, until this time, has not been widely recognized as placing the highest priority on the environment. She was certainly moving with astounding speed on the ozone problem at that point.

Many other countries have signed the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer, but there are still major problems. This is a global problem. Emissions that come from nations in Asia have impact in the Americas and vice versa. All countries need to be committed to reducing and phasing out emissions of ozone-depleting chemicals. But there are currently major countries like China which have not signed the Montreal Protocol. In many cases they don't have the standard of living that many of us in the West already enjoy. For example, many people in developing nations are just beginning to acquire refrigerators—and currently those they can afford use ozone-depleting chemicals. Until the West can help them find new technologies to meet those demands for a better quality of life, they—quite rightly—are not going to give up their right to have those technologies we already have.

BW: *Here is a question from a student in Tennessee. If a poll shows that a majority of Americans view acid rain as a greater security threat than the Soviets, shouldn't government spending mirror this?*

RA: Yes. And Senator Gore has written and spoken widely on the idea that the environment is now a national security issue. Previously we have looked on national security issues as being ones like the Soviet military threat to the West, but the environment has become one because actions that are taken elsewhere around the globe have major implications here. We need to address environmental problems on a scale that is comparable to our response to previous national security problems. Acid rain is one of those trans-boundary problems., along with global warming and stratospheric ozone depletion. In Europe it causes major confrontations between nations. Emissions from East German coal plants have implications for forests elsewhere in Europe. In this hemisphere, Canada has a major problem with U.S. emissions of sulphur dioxide which leads to acid rain. Canadians are adamant about the need for control. And in the U.S., we feel the impact of emissions from Canada. But we don't seem to have the same commitment, the same level of priority assigned to reducing acid rain as the Canadians. I think that is coming. The new clean air act will address the acid rain problem and cut back significantly on emissions.

BW: *What about education? This is another question from Tennessee. What is being done to inform people—especially young people? We need to convince the masses that pollution does affect them, that it is not an abstract issue. In fact, individuals are the most responsible for pollution.*

RA: Exactly. The global environmental crisis is not one that is going to be solved by just cutting back major pollution sources like industry. That is an important part, but the whole issue involves the impact of individuals on the environment.

What is being done about education? Well, that occurs in the schools, of course, and teachers are playing a major role in helping their students understand the environmental problems that our planet faces—problems to be faced by the young people when they become adults. We must work hard to make your world better, but you are going to have your work cut out for you when the time comes.

Education occurs also through the media, and I believe that this World Class Conference was initiated through a reading of a *Newsweek* article about the environmental crisis. Major media have had cover stories. It's in the newspapers. It's on the nightly news. The media are making a strong effort to educate people about the problems that we all face.

The education is also coming from your leaders. Senator Gore is perhaps the most outspoken national leader who has made the environment a priority issue, and he is working hard to inform his constituents and the nation as a whole about the magnitude of the problems that we face and the solutions that we are going to have to implement in order to face the challenge squarely.

BW: *I hope you see this computer conference as a good educational tool, too. Through it you are doing a lot. You are reaching out to more people than you think.*

RA: I understand the power of a computer and a computer network. Participating students are becoming involved early, and that is a very good thing.

BW: *I'll ask one more question from Tennessee, then we'll go to another part of the country. We've read about the possible banning of gasoline-powered automobiles in California by the year 2009. Is there any talk in Washington about curbing automobile usage on a nationwide basis? Do you think Americans would cooperate with any such intrusion into their personal lives?*

RA: Phrased as it is, the answer to the second half of the question would have to be,"No." This is a nation built on individual freedom. Our strength is our respect of individual rights.

Now for the first part of the question about gasoline-powered automobiles in California. That is becoming an issue in California because of the intensity of the air pollution problem that Southern Californians face on a daily basis, particularly the ground-level gases which are formed from vehicle emissions interacting with sunlight. They're looking at many measures in California to cut down on those emissions—everything from banning backyard barbecues to alternatively powered vehicles, to the types of paint that people use on their houses.

California is doing that because they recognize that all these little things add up to a large problem. There are so many people in Southern California that collectively they have a major impact. It results in the smog that Southern California is famous for.

There is certainly talk in Washington about increasing the efficiency of our vehicles. You might remember that standards were set back in the late 1970's when we had an oil crisis and we realized that our vehicles had to get better gas mileage, if we weren't to become dependent on foreign oil supplies.

In the long term, we need to look at better mass transit systems, alternatively powered vehicles—perhaps using electricity, hydrogen, fuel cells, or solar energy. We can look at measures to provide transportation services that will be less harmful to the environment over the long term, because as the number of Americans grows, the number of vehicles that are on the highways grows and the number of miles that are traveled in those vehicles grows. The impact that those vehicles have on the environment is only going to increase.

BW: *A student in New York wants to know if it would be effective if more Americans boycott fast food chains that use beef from burned rain forests or companies that pollute with styrofoam and plastic.*

RA: That is a highly astute question. I think you know as well as I do that consumer choices in the marketplace will have a major impact on what happens, what future course is taken in solving the environmental problems that we face. The products you buy have some impact on the environment—anything from the automobile that you buy to the food you purchase over the counter. The tuna that you eat: was it caught with nets that also kill marine mammals? Or was it caught by other techniques that don't harm other animals of the sea? The products that you buy: are they packaged with materials that are recyclable or packaged with materials that are going to go into the landfill and then stay there until someone digs them out and figures out what to do with them next?

Consumer choices are key here, and that's what we mean when we say that people need to act in their individual lives to determine the impact they're having on the environment and try to make it a less harmful, more environmentally safe lifestyle.

BW: *Let me add to that question. I saw the statement in the article that Senator Gore wrote for the* New York Times *that he is pushing for doing away with product containers that are not biodegradable. Is there legislation for this in effect?*

RA: He's introduced legislation to that effect, as well as two other bills that will help to strengthen markets for recycled materials, and therefore strengthen recycling programs. He knows that in his own state of Tennessee there is a real crisis in the amount of landfill space available for garbage. Unless we address that crisis directly, it's going to get worse. The population is growing; the amount of waste we put out is growing. Nobody wants a new landfill in the backyard, and nobody wants an incinerator there.

BW: *Here is a question from South Carolina. What chance do you honestly see that we'll wake up in time? You didn't see the picture as being quite as gloomy as McKibben.*

RA: I think we'll wake up. Around the world we're seeing a global movement growing fast that is highly active and highly conscious of the environmental problems we're facing.

In Europe leaders like Prime Minister Thatcher are responding to a political movement within their countries to emphasize the environment. In Australia you see Prime Minister Hawke and in France President Mitterand. You hear President Gorbachev making statements that are pro-environment. I hope that in this country our leaders will wake up in time. Senator Gore realizes the scope of the problem, and he has a sound grasp of the solutions that will be required.

BW: *A student from North Carolina asks if there are any international organizations formed or being formed to control pollution worldwide.*

RA: Because of the ozone depletion problem, the nations of the world got together under the auspices of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme, to negotiate the Montreal Protocol—an international agreement to limit emissions of ozone-depleting chemicals. Likewise there's a process going on right now which we hope is going to lead to similar negotiations of emissions that might cause global warming. That process is called Intergovernment Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC.

The IPCC is also working under the auspices of the United Nations and involves governments from around the world gathering together to decide once and for all what we know and what is uncertain, what we need to do to respond to the problem and how we will go about responding.

Just recently on yet another front, there has been a worldwide movement to protect Antarctica as a global ecological commons. It would be protected from mining. There has been a treaty negotiated recently that will allow minerals development in Antarctica, but many countries are against it, saying that they don't want mineral development there—that it will just cause environmental damage. We saw what happened in Alaska with the Exxon Valdez spill. We can't afford to have that happen in Antarctica.

Senator Gore introduced the resolution in the United States Senate that would call for U.S. support of full protection of Antarctica as a global ecological commons. He's joined in that effort by leaders such as Mitterand and Hawke. Jacques Cousteau is another world leader working hard to protect Antarctica's environment. Antarctica could be the first place for the world as a whole to draw a line and say, "Finally, we're going to put environmental priorities above mining priorities rather than the other way around as it has been traditionally."

PERSPECTIVES

BW: A Kentucky student wonders what action the United States should take, besides being willing to take a part in debt-for-nature swaps, to help preserve the environment in Brazil and at the same time meet basic human needs of food and shelter.

RA: I just want to say that the students' questions that you're asking are very encouraging, because they show an acute awareness on the part of these students of the scope of the problem. This student is linking environmental problems with poverty, and in many ways that is the key to the problems.

Poverty is behind much of what is harming the environment in the Third World. The people need to satisfy their basic human needs—whether it's cutting down trees because people need fuel wood or burning forests because they need land to grow crops. It's all driven by the necessity of satisfying basic human needs.

The United States and other industrial countries are largely responsible for the problems that we face today. After all, it's our economic development that led to the atmospheric pollutants causing the problems right now. The industrial countries need to help alleviate the poverty that is so prevalent in the Third World.

The debt problem is just another manifestation of the poverty of these countries. They had to borrow the money in the first place to help their people satisfy basic human needs. Granted there were many problems in some of the countries with corruption and with government officials lining their pockets with the money. But in general, the reason for the loans was to satisfy basic human needs.

Today, the demand for servicing those debts is leading to further environmental destruction. It is incumbent upon the United States and other developed countries to come forward with real solutions to the debt crisis to help these countries out of the box that they're in.

BW: This question is from a small town in the upper part of Michigan. The student asks how small communities like ours, under 10,000, can slow down the greenhouse effect. What can people in small communities do?

RA: Small communities can do the things each of us needs to do on an individual basis (after all every one of us in the end is part of some small community). That is to look at what we're doing and try to find out if there are ways we can minimize our impact on the global warming problem. Can we ride our bikes to the store instead of driving our cars? Can we carpool? Can we increase the insulation in our homes so we don't need as much energy to heat them? Can we demand products that have less impact on the environment, that are less energy intensive—such as more efficient light bulbs? If the automobile air conditioner is leaking, do we just add more freon, more chlorofluorocarbons to it, or do we take it in and get it fixed, get the leak plugged before we add more chlorofluorocarbons?

Recycling materials like aluminum, glass, and paper has a major impact on the amount of energy required in our overall economy to supply new goods and services. Any small community can recycle, and that would be a major step forward.

BW: Frequently people feel paralyzed about what to do. Politically, are there any suggestions? Should they write somebody?

RA: Yes. Every individual can write. Each of you has a Congressman and a governor, and each of you has a couple of Senators. All of you have a President. Write to them. Let them know how you feel.

In your community, put together a petition stating how you feel about the problems and what you think needs to be done. Have everyone sign it. Take it to your political leaders. They respond to the needs of the constituents. You have a huge amount of influence. You just need to realize the power that you have within your own community to make changes. That power is your collective voice. That voice needs to be heard. Finally, you need to exert that voice when you vote. Make sure that your candidates are putting as high a priority on the environment as you think needs to be put on it. Make sure they commit to making environmental protection a major priority during their terms in office. Then vote for the candidates because of that commitment.

I recognize this network reaches a wide audience. I think that what you're doing is terrific. As these kids continue to grow in awareness of the challenges we face, they can become part of the solution. When I was in grade school, the challenge was the space race. I wanted to be an astronaut. I think the challenge for young people today is going to be developing the means for the economies of all nations to grow, raising the standard of living around the world, while preserving the quality of the global environment. It's as big a challenge as getting into space was back then.

BW: It seems like people are getting involved. People no longer think of environmentalists as misguided do-gooders and nay-sayers.

RA: Yes, it's a whole new issue. And it is a vital issue. ❑

For seven weeks beginning March 5th and ending on the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day (April 22), BreadNet will sponsor Earth Day Project, its third global discussion of environmental issues. The conference will link several education networks—including Campus 2000, a European network of schools, and Iris, an education network in the United States. Senator Gore will be an online guest during a week in March. The public affairs office at Time magazine will supply each participating student with a copy of its planet-of-the-year issue.

The World Class environmental conference

by Carol Stumbo

> *"And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles, but only by a spiritual journey of one inch, very arduous and humbling and joyful, by which we arrive at the ground at our feet, and learn to be home."*
>
> —Wendell Berry, Kentucky essayist

I am concerned—no, really a little frightened about what is happening to this earth we live on, and because I am from a part of the country where the land has been ravaged by strip mining, I believe in the need to educate students about environmental issues. Last spring, my high school journalism students took part in the World Class environmental conference on BreadNet. For a couple of weeks, we joined teachers and students from New York, Montana, Virginia, Chile, and Peru to talk about the destruction of the world's rain forests. We debated economic and environmental issues, we asked questions of each other and of representatives from the Nature Conservancy, we reaffirmed each other's beliefs about the importance of the environment, we defined the crisis that exists, and we wrote essays. The World Class conference was one of the most exciting times in the school year—so exciting at times, that my students and even I were oblivious to the amount of writing that we were doing. In fact, at times, it didn't even seem that we were writing. It was the thinking that mattered. Wonderful voices emerged from that conference—the young voices of Tracy Winn's students in Massachusetts who made us believe that anything was possible and reminded us of the wonders of the rain forests; the students from South America who spoke eloquently of the needs of the people of Brazil and who made us face our own environmental problems; the commitment of the students at Ken Holvig's school in New York who act on their environmental beliefs through their "Save Our Planet" club.

I have asked myself several times why this conference was so important. The closest I can come to answering the question lies in the nature of the class itself. For more than two weeks, I had access to some wonderful teachers, and most of them didn't have any degrees. They were the students who took part in the conference. I began with a group of kids who knew little about the rain forests and who had a vague sense of where Brazil and Chile and Peru were located. By the time the conference ended, they had learned so much from the teaching taking place online.

Bill Wright, the director of BreadNet, had asked all of us to read a special issue of *National Geographic* that discussed the dangers being posed to the rain forests. The articles in that issue helped to dispel some of our ignorance. But I have to admit that it was difficult reading for some of my kids. If I had been a sane person, I would have looked at my school's test scores and concluded that this was too much for them.

Forgetting the fact that the material was difficult, I was also asking students who had only begun to use computers to suddenly adjust to terms such as "modem" and being "online." They looked at me with more than a little suspicion when I returned from Bread Loaf and talked to them about becoming part of a national computer hookup. For weeks, they regarded the Apple IIe with its modem as some kind of invader. Much of what I was asking was new ground for them. The demands on them were great, but even that was important. We knew if we wanted to take part in the discussion we had to digest the information in the articles. I think some of the kids took pride in the fact that no quarter was being given to them. If they wanted to play, then they had to grapple with the sense of an article, had to understand what they were reading so they could use the information. That is not such an important fact if you are a student attending a school well-known for its academic toughness. For us it was a challenge.

After reading the *National Geographic* issue, we did some additional research in our school library. We posted a huge map in the classroom showing the location of the world's rain forests and the countries in South America. We defined terms such as global warming, we prepared bibliographies, we learned how to take notes, we examined articles in other news magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* for their content and journalistic merit, and students collaborated on pieces of writing that they would post on the main conference. Toward the end of the conference, we volunteered to act as judges for an essay contest being held by the classes in South America. My students established criteria they would use in selecting the top essays, and we devoted a couple of afternoons to rereading all those essays that had been posted. It was a valuable experience for my students. I have never worried a great deal about test scores, but I am firmly convinced that if the entire State Department of Education had walked into my classroom as we worked on the environmental conference, they would have witnessed students attacking head on all the skills that the state of Kentucky has identified as essential for the grade level I was teaching: the ability to separate fact from opinion, to interpret a piece of literature, to summarize key thoughts. And they would have approved.

As we began the conference, I don't think all of my students cared in any deep way about what we were doing. The loss of a rain forest was not all that significant to them. I did not try to change that opinion. We discussed the issues, we argued as I usually do with my students, and we went forward. During the course of the conference, students began to respond to the notes that were being sent across the wires, and things began to change. The learning that was going on was essentially being controlled by the students. As a teacher, I was there to help, but the real dialogue was taking place among students. Sometimes they felt as if they were writing to the air, but when they made contact with someone at the other end, it was a powerful experience. An essay from Chile consumed one of my student's attention for days. She could not let go of it until she had written her own essay about her feelings towards the environment.

Essays that touched them or angered them also became the focus of our class discussions. Because of the number of responses and essays arriving through the hookup, students did not always read everything or respond to everything, but they read the majority of the notes and in most cases found messages that they could relate to. I am convinced that the discussions that we had were of greater depth than anything that would have occurred if we had not been linked to other parts of the world. Eastern Kentucky has been used as a source for timber and coal since the early 1900's. Despite the wealth of the resources in our part of the state, many people have remained poor. As my students and I talked, we found similarities between our history and what was happening to people in South America. My students understood what it was like to be caught between the need to survive and a concern for the environment, and in a way, the discussion of the rain forests helped us look at our own situation in a thoughtful way.

This year, near the end of a World Class conference in November, three of my students approached me after class, and one of the shyest of the group asked, "Can we really do something?" They can. They have decided to begin a recycling project at our school and have written to one of our guest speakers, a college student who works with an environmental group at the other end of the state. He plans to visit them in the spring to help them get organized. They have gone out into our community, taken photographs of garbage and litter and strip mining sites, written articles about those conditions and submitted them to the local newspaper where they have been published. They care, and I have to believe that they will make a difference. I am not sure that any of that would have happened if they had not been able to see the commitment of those students on World Class.

Telecommunications is a powerful tool. This century has been described by some experts as the century of the "global village," but when students nationwide are asked to locate South Africa on the map, they can't do so. We need to be smarter. We need to find ways to raise student awareness, not just of conditions in South America, but of those a few miles down the road. I am convinced that the classroom of the future will be a great deal like what is happening on World Class, and that thought pleases me. If we are going to exercise a wise stewardship of the earth and its resources, we need a broad perspective. It is one thing to discuss local waste sites and quite another to read notes from across the country where everyone seems to be experiencing the same kind of problem. I think you begin to see the magnitude of the problem only as you read reports from Montana, Michigan, and Peru. Recently, I was able to talk to one of the seniors from last year, and she wanted to know if I remembered the environmental conference. I told her that I did. She smiled and said, "That was a lot of fun." That is part of what I want her to remember. ❑

Carol Stumbo teaches at Wheelwright High School, Wheelwright, Kentucky.

During the May conference, World Class sponsored an International Environmental Essay contest. Jason Earl's essay provoked other students to write their own testaments or rebuttals.

I'm Not Just Doing This for My Health

I suppose I should be angry; after all this is my world, too, and it's not my fault it's getting all mucked up. Unfortunately, I don't feel it's a big enough problem to really worry about. What with that short story due in English and that test tomorrow in calculus, I don't have time to worry about things like the fish dying in Alaska or the dolphins perishing out there by the millions at the hands of hardworking fishermen. It's not that I'm heartless either. It's just that, well, it seems to me that there are better ways to spend tons of money than on things like whales that are going to die anyway or cleaning air and water when the world is dumping everything from sewage to mercury in the ocean. Why doesn't the government just give me the money if they want to waste it?

Not that I have many complaints about the government. I'm no radical subversive. I can't even vote yet. But maybe sometimes it is a little slow— and a little misinformed. I'll express my opinion anyway in the hope that something actually gets done. And if nothing gets done, I'll take the twenty extra credit points my English teacher is giving me and run with them.

Like I said, I'm pretty busy, but that doesn't stop me from noticing a few things going on that make me nervous. Although I'm an American citizen, I happen to be living in Lima, Peru. One of the things that I really notice about Lima is that there are a lot of places here that make East L.A. look like Disneyland. Quite a few people find it hard not only to make ends meet, but to keep themselves from starving to death. Maybe it's because I am seriously immature (or unable to vote), but something seems terribly wrong here. Now these people, like many other people in the world would like to see a world 100% free of pollution, but take it from me, I'm sure most of them would settle for the chance to make $100 a month dumping arsenic into streams. The NOW for these people is much more important that the LATER.

Perhaps you're asking yourself, "I thought that this essay was supposed to be about Mother Earth." I'd like you to think for a second. Who else is quite a bit more interested in building toasters now and getting rid of the waste sometime in the future? Who else for the reward of profit would dump poisons, toxins, and radioactive wastes into the atmosphere? You know exactly who I'm talking about. We are the idiots poisoning our own atmosphere. (Well, anyway you probably are. I can't vote yet.) The Peruvians are not the only people in the world who hurt the environment. We don't care, and we know better. We, like the Peruvians, would like the world to be suddenly clean, but I'm willing to bet that we'd never give up driving, dumping trash, or buying things made of plastic just to have a clean earth.

I had a reason for starting my essay with a reference to Peru. We all know that part of the basic function of a government is to waste money. Some waste it on leaders, some on warfare, and some on other things like parties and fancy buildings. The American government, however, is by far the richest government that ever existed, and as such, it wastes more money. Because of its ideological background, however, America has its own way of wasting money. It wastes it on itself. This is accomplished through various means— bureaucracy, bribes, more bureaucracy, and through acts that, although they mean well, fail to accomplish anything significant. What I suggest, and what would be suggested by all the people I know, is that if the government is going to waste money, why not waste it down here in South America and stimulate the economy.

Either way I suppose I really don't care that much. I'd like to give you some other reasons why I believe we should get serious about this pollution thing or forget it, but I have a calculus test tomorrow.

Besides this is more than enough for those twenty extra credit points. After all I'm not just doing this for my health.

Jason Earl
American School of Lima, Peru

Recipe for a rain forest: an integrated curriculum

by Tracy Winn

First and second graders understand what they can experience, take apart, create, and recreate of their world. My first choice would have been to take my class (and my self), all frosty New Englanders, to the Amazon basin in order to make that tropical world come to life for each of us. Instead, my class of 1981 built the first of several "rain forests" that were to take over my classroom and many imaginations.

We began in February and didn't let go of the huge metaphor we had created until the close of school when we cut the brightly colored canopy birds from the ceiling, took the snakes out of the trees in the math area, collected the caimans from the river shore in the block corner, scooped the dark insects, dusky colored ant birds, and tarantulas from the forest floor under the writing table, and laid the tree trunks along side the dumpster in the driveway.

During that spring, the children and I were immersed in the art, writing, measuring, graphing, constructing, listening, reading, and talking it takes to begin to understand another world. We lived in a rain forest, of our own construction, sometimes as ornithologists, sometimes as anthropologists, sometimes as tourists. We wrote adventure stories, scientific experiments, letters home, announcements of upcoming events, instructions for how to build a tree, or a terrarium, or how to papier-mache a sloth. We saw school neighbors' slide shows of their trips to the Amazon and National Geographic specials. We went to local museums and zoos. We learned about climate, geography, foodchains, ecosystems, native people and animals, myths, dances, environmental studies being done, and anything else our curiosity led us to in the Amazon forest. (An older group of students could go deeper into the history, economics, and literature or narrative history of the area.)

Since the rain forests of the world have been getting so much press recently, the books and magazine articles you may choose from far exceed any list I had to work from in the beginning. My primary source, other than my brother who was living in the jungle, was a November, 1974, issue of *Ranger Rick*.

The first step, after doing some research, is to publish a list of needed materials and circulate it through the school community. The second step is to enlist helpers to go scrounging door to door in your neighborhood or at factories. This project needn't cost anything beyond the expense of tempera paint, glue, tissue paper, and insect-making materials like tinsel and mylar.

It was a big project, but with long-lasting results. One of those six-year-olds who left the school last year at the age of fourteen sent me a small plastic box. In it were six tiny blown glass leaf-cutter ants to tell me he remembers the rain forest.

Ingredients for a rain forest

Twenty-four six and seven-year-olds (The recipe can be adapted to older ingredients.)
A teacher who enjoys learning and comes with own classroom
A few willing parents to scrounge for materials or stray administrators with circular saws
Time and imagination (Substitutions may be made for any of the ingredients except these.)
Tree trunks: Four or five 14'x10' cardboard tubes, from rug cleaners
Tree branches: lathing scraps or true branches
Leaves: stiff paper to cut and paint, or tissue paper and scrap telephone wire, starch
Flowers: tissue paper and telephone wire
Background murals: many 6"x8" sheets of paper, paper mill or billboard scrap
Mammals and reptiles of the forest floor: papier-mache—as much old chicken wire as you can find, piles of old newspapers and wheat paste or wall paper glue; stuffed cloth animals—large cloth scraps, stuffing (with light material, shredded newsprint for stuffing), buttons for eyes, thread and needles and pins
Snakes: old pantyhose, stuffing of any kind, paints, red cloth scraps for tongues, buttons or beads for eyes
Insects: pipe cleaners, scraps of mylar, glitter, tinsel, plastic wrap (wings)
Birds: mobiles of as many materials as you can think of like coat hangers, fishing line, cardboard, photographs from magazines, feathers
Miscellaneous: Tempera paint and paint brushes of various sizes, glue, scissors, crayons, markers, ruler, newspaper, old mixing bowls, pencils

If you would like to try your own version of a rain forest, but would like first to talk to someone who has done it, write to Tracy Winn at the Atrium School, 552 Main Street, Watertown, MA 02172. She will be happy to give you suggestions and the names of teachers who have built other forests with older children. ❑

Environmental Organizations

Compiled by Hugh Coyle

Audubon Society: 950 Third Avenue, New York City, New York 10022
Involved in land appropriation and wildlife refuge maintenance as well as local workshops and field trips.

Co-op America: 2100 Main Street NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20063
Provides information on "responsible products and investments" and warns against companies whose policies have adverse effects on the environment.

Cultural Survival: 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Earth Day 1990: P.O. Box AA, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305
Activities are planned throughout April including urban gatherings, campus seminars, and tree plantings.

Environmental Defense Fund: 257 Park Avenue South, New York City, New York 10010

Global Releaf: Dept. BH, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, D.C. 20013
A national campaign to reduce the buildup of carbon dioxide by planting trees and reducing deforestation. Arbor Day kits and curriculum mini-guides are available.

Greenpeace USA: 1436 U Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009
Radical yet energetic environmental and animal rights group in the news more than once for their high visibility activist campaigns.

Institute for Gaean Economics: 64 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Montpelier, Vermont 05602

National Wildlife Federation: 1412 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-2266

The Nature Conservancy: 1815 N. Lynn Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209
Purchases endangered areas of land using members' donations and thus protects land by ownership and stewardship. Offers many workshops and field trips.

New England Tropical Forest Project: P.O. Box 73, Strafford, Vermont 05072

Rainforest Action Network: 300 Broadway, Suite 29, San Francisco, California 94133

Sierra Club: P.O. Box 7959, San Francisco, California 94120

The Wilderness Society: 20 Park Plaza, Suite 536, Boston, Massachusetts 02116

World Wildlife Fund: 1250 24th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037 ❑

An online community

by Ike Coleman

Biology students who want to grow molds put them in little jars called Petrie dishes because, apparently, that's where molds like to grow. Schools are where censorship likes to grow. My principal banned a book from our reading list because of its title, *A Hero Ain't Nothin But a Sandwich*. It's the grammar he didn't like—he thought it would be a bad influence on the kids' talk and writing. That's an extreme case, surely, but just about any book that's worth reading is controversial enough for it to be banned in many schools. Much of the most insidious censorship in schools, though, is quieter. Because teachers often have little or no power and live their professional lives at the whim of principals, central office administrators, and the public, they become acutely aware of what could be offensive to any of those constituencies, and often don't take the risk of offending anyone. The result, in many schools, is that students read and write little that might challenge their thinking in any way.

I've been trying to come to understand why BreadNet seems so free from the constraints on expression that pervade so many schools. What is it that encourages people teaching five classes a day, collaborating with students after school on projects, and reading papers over the weekend to pay to spend their free time writing about education for a fairly small audience—with none of the perks of publishing?

I think I won't find the answer. I believe in analyzing the question I'll be doing what my son did when he was two—pull apart the pansies to find out what makes them grow. But I'll try. Part of the attraction is simply the close-knit community of dedicated and loving teachers that make up the network. It's a great privilege to write, to ask questions, to explore in collaboration with such a community. I think it would be hard to find such a group of teachers in one place anywhere. But I'm afraid I'm chasing my tail here; I suspect that our dedication—and our need to understand—is sustained and nurtured by the network.

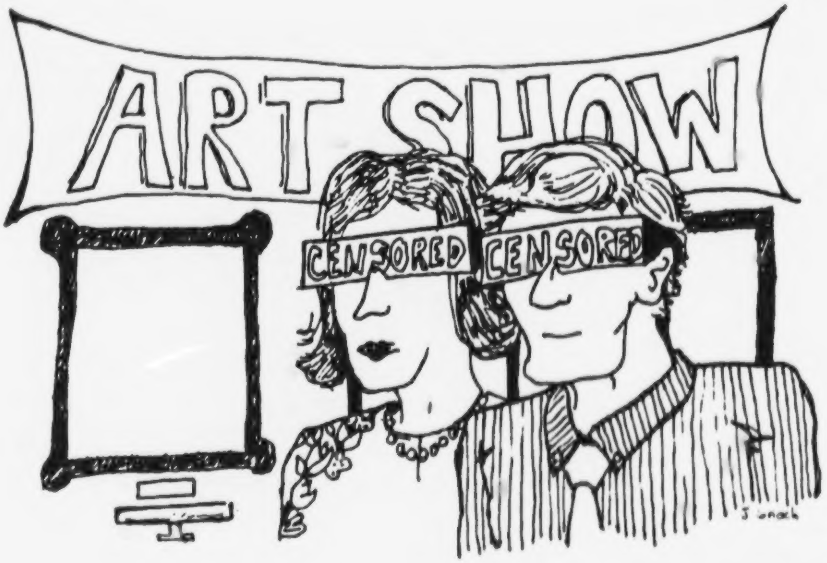
In addition, writing is different by computer and modem. The medium lends itself to quick expression of the ideas that are uppermost in the minds of writers. Unlike published pieces, writing on BreadNet is less polished, less revised, but perhaps more alive, more free-flowing. On the network, I think, writers have less investment in the writing itself than with the writing they do for publication, but more investment in the ideas. As a result, BreadNetters tend to be less self-conscious about what they write, more willing to take risks, and more amenable to criticism of their ideas.

And BreadNet is democratic, a quality attractive and sustaining to teachers and students who so often live in rigidly hierarchical systems, where freedom of expression is severely limited. Though Bill Wright is the director, he makes few decisions without consulting the teachers and students on the network. Frequently his ideas are changed by the consensus on the network, so that the democratic quality of BreadNet allows for innovations that are rich and rewarding to all. Most of all, though, the network's democracy allows a rural elementary school teacher to feel equal as a writer with a professor at Georgetown.

BreadNet is diverse, in every respect. The writing on any given day might range from a description of a fishing village in Alaska to the role of dialect in language learning. The people and places are diverse as well. There's a whole conference devoted to Native American issues, for instance, and BreadNet schools nearly span the globe. That kind of diversity counters what might otherwise become clubbiness in such a close community, and it counters uniformity of beliefs. Rarely do opinions go unexamined and unquestioned.

BreadNet just has a magic that can't easily be captured in an analysis.❑

Ike Coleman directs the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, Clemson, S.C.



Jeremy Gooch
Tenth D. W. Daniel High School
Central, SC

Touching the world

by Ike Coleman and Leslie Owens

World Trade is one of the oldest computer conferences on BreadNet, set up for students around the country and the world to share and respond to descriptions of the places where they live. Students on World Trade send descriptions—usually fairly polished, and often eloquent—of their communities and their cultures, for response on the network. But unlike some conferences such as "Workshop," the responses focus not on the writing itself but on the subject of the pieces. A student in Wilsall, Montana, responding to a note from another student in Lima will not say, "You need to work on paragraph formation," but will instead write, "We don't have terrorism in Wilsall, but we do have some crime."

To help students prepare writing for publication, directing the responses to the quality of the writing makes sense as a conference like "Workshop" shows. But students—and others—also need to see that writing can be, and at times should be, a more direct medium for communication. When students are allowed to concentrate on communicating content to the diverse but very immediate audience on World Trade, the human connection between writer and audience becomes stronger.

And, given the variety of places and people on World Trade, the connections students make between their places and the ones they read about are startling. Students in tiny Salem, South Carolina, for instance, read about a New York City bodega and immediately reply with a description of the small grocery stores in Salem. Such connections, apparent throughout the conference, bridge cultures, helping to break down prejudices.

Students can learn about other cultures and places on World Trade in ways almost unavailable anywhere else. Through what other medium is a student in Wheelwright, Kentucky, likely to learn about ratfish and skates in Port Alexander, Alaska? But while learning to appreciate the richness of the differences around the globe, students also learn the beauties of their own places through other eyes. Students in Deming, New Mexico, for instance, write about traditional foods in Mexican culture—foods that for the Deming kids are probably everyday, but the students write with a pride sharpened by communication with an outside audience. And Salem students, responding to a description of a big city, write not about how boring their town is—the rural teenager's lament—but about the natural beauty around them.

World Trade exemplifies one of the most important characteristics of the student conferences on BreadNet: Students at every place on the socioeconomic scale participate. All these students meet and learn from each other on BreadNet. Though World Trade is unique among conferences on BreadNet, it holds this in common with all of them: In the age of technology, no other medium available allows people from all over the world to communicate simultaneously so efficiently—and so cheaply. World Trade, therefore, provides an unequalled way for students to touch—and affect—people and places around the globe.

Ike Coleman is director of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network.

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ACTION on WORLD TRADE

2 (of 139) LIMA Dec. 3, 1988 at 11:25

Peru is a third world country that is trying to keep up with the times. The papers make it sound a lot worse off than it is, not that it doesn't have its problems. It's extremely unstable politically. The government is supposedly Democratic, but in reality it's more authoritarian and the President, Garcia, can basically do whatever he wants. Last year he nationalized the Banks, refusing to repay the owners and letting go a number of employees.

The predominant Terrorist group, The "Sendero Luminoso" (The Shining Path) will often bomb power plants, causing blackouts in various areas of the city. These blackouts are known as "apagones." They terrorize the smaller cities and will do periodic raids either killing or torturing the people. The Indians in these cities are caught between the government and the terrorists because the terrorists kill them if they don't join their 'cause' and the police will kill them if they do. It's common to see armored cars and men with machine guns, as well an an occasional tank.

But that's the bad part; there are a lot of advantages we have here that you can't get in the States, like the beach resorts, the discotecs, the pubs and just learning about a new culture. The beach resorts are incredible; one is about three hours out of Lima, traveling by car, and another is on the border between Ecuador and Peru, called Punta Sal (Point Salt). It's got wind surfing, parasailing, volleyball on the beach, tennis courts, and bungalows directly on the beach. The prices are less than half of what you would pay in the States and airfare is also extremely cheap, so it is popular for breaks and for vacation. . . .

Peru's economic situation is extremely poor. The poor class represents over 90% of the people, there is virtually no middle class, and the rich, who make up about 5% of the people, are wealthy beyond belief. Lima itself is a pretty dirty city, as there are over seven million people. The reason for the population being that high is that the Indians in the mountains who have a hard life hear about Lima and how wonderful it is come here and then end up on the streets. Watching those people live on the street with absolutely nothing is the hardest part of living here.

Nicole Beck
The American School of Lima

4 (of 139) JFORSYTH Dec. 10, 1988 at 21:21

Dear Nicole,

Peru definitely sounds like an entirely different place than the United States. I never hear that much about it on the news or anything so there's a lot I didn't know about it. I had no idea that the terrorist problem was so bad. I think I would probably be a little afraid to be living in the middle of that. Is the fighting and stuff anything like what's going on with the P.L.O. or is it a little more under control than that? Don't get me wrong; there does sound like there are a lot of advantages to living there. The beaches sound great. I live in Montana so, unless I go down to California or something, I don't get to go to the beach all the time. I would love to live three hours away from a good beach. Are the beaches anything like the ones up here? (That was probably a stupid question.) I was really surprised when you said how much lower the prices were for everything down there. It would sure be nice if things didn't cost so much here.

Amy Logan

7 (of 139) LWOLLIN Dec. 11, 1988 at 9:58

The Bodega

by Edgar Hernandez, Park West High School, New York City

As I am entering the bodega (a bodega is a Hispanic grocery store), I open the big glass door full of dirt spots. On the top of the door there is an air conditioner with water dripping from it. As I am going in further, I hear the ringing sound of the cash register. As I walk towards the counter, I see the light brown color of the register and numbers quickly coming up and down. The well-dressed bright young lady is opening the register, and I am seeing all that green money.

BREADNET

In the bodega there are long sections with all different kinds of foods. In the first section there are beans. At the right there is ice cream. In the second section there are potato chips and all kinds of junk foods—popcorn, twinkies, and onion rings. In the very back there are different kinds of garbage bags: bags for leaves, bags for kitchens, and larger kitchen bags. At the front, there are all kinds of candies, like gum, jawbreakers, and delicious sweets. To the very left there is a C-Town supermarket box with plenty of Italian breads. The shiny floors are in very good condition. Where you enter, to the right there is a section of all different kinds of vegetables and many boxes. There are boxes for fruits, like apples, bananas, oranges, and grapes. The walls are colored bright white. In the back, next to the garbage bags, there is an electronic poker game. Aside from it is a refrigerator with all kinds of sodas. At the very last section there are plenty of cat and dog foods. On the opposite side of it are products like cheese, ham, franks, and milk.

34 (of 139) KLEUPOLD Feb. 13, 1989 at 8:11

I am sending you this letter to inform you about our state of New Mexico. First of all, it is really a nice place to live. The weather isn't too cold nor too hot. There is no humidity because there is not a big amount of water surrounding us like an ocean, but there are a few lakes and rivers. Some things in the summer: it gets real hot because New Mexico is just a desert with a lot of yuccas and mesquite bushes.

The crime rate here is very low because we have such a very small state. Places here are very interesting to go to. Every year a certain activity goes on in the town of Deming, New Mexico. All kinds of people come from all over the States to race their Ducks or just to watch them race. This event is called The Great American Duck Race. They do not only race ducks. There are a lot of other events like the tortilla toss where they see who can throw the tortilla the farthest. There are air balloons that go up into the sky and a lot more events.

Sandy Milo

In Mexican culture certain foods are a tradition. My family always makes *posole* on holidays, especially during Christmas. It is made of red chile, pork meat, and hominy. First you cook the meat in water. While the meat is cooking, the chile is made in a blender from red chile pods. Then the hominy is added to the meat.

Another dish is *tamales*. We make them from scratch. The *tamales* are made of ground corn, red chile, and the head of a pork. First the corn is cooked in lime water until the kernel's outer layer falls off. Then the corn is rinsed and drained. The corn is then ground up. After the corn is ground up, it is mixed together with lard and the juices of the meat until it forms a soft dough. The dough is spread on a corn husk and then a little chile and meat are added.

Teresa Roybal.

38 (of 139) JFORSYTH Mar. 1, 1989 at 21:49

Here are some responses from Wilsall students to the terrific writings from Deming, NM. A teaching aside: I've used the World Trade writings this year as an integral part of our sophomore English class. As I've mentioned before, we're in a year-long project studying our own heritage, and the writings from around the country have enriched and highlighted the unique qualities or our area, which students sometimes take for granted. Thanks for providing such a wonderful resource.

John Forsyth

Dear Sandy Milo,

New Mexico sounds like an interesting place. I have been through the tip of New Mexico, but that is about it. All I saw was mainly desert, which you never see up here. The land up here is mainly covered with mountains and trees. Have you ever traveled up through this area? We have many pretty areas up here. The summer is the hottest season for us, which really isn't that hot. Our winters get pretty cold and tend to stay through the month of March.

Have you been to one of those duck races that you were talking about? I have never heard of something like that; it sounds pretty strange. We don't have that many different activities up here. Wilsall is real small and there isn't a whole lot to do.

Lanie Franks

45 (of 139) JRE Mar. 14, 1989 at 14:49

Hi. Yes, Israel is now online. This is Judy Eber in Tel Aviv. I will be speaking with the English teacher at Kibbutz Maabarot. She would love to have some of her students on World Trade. More within the week.

89.2400 by JOHNASL, Mar. 14, 1989 at 15:33
To: Wilsall, Montana
From: American School in London
Hi Matt and Justin,

Thanks for the note. To see in London: Westminster Abbey, Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, Buckingham Palace, London Tower, The Hard Rock Cafe… I could go on and on, because I've given thousands of tours to all the people who have come to visit me. I love mountains—you are very lucky. The "native" people here do not eat the same food really—we don't have Reese's peanut butter cups and we just got M&Ms last year. The most prized English meals? Fish and Chips, Roast Beef…Anything heavy and filling. The clothes here are much more expensive, and really stylish. When I first moved here I hated the food, clothes, and music, but I have come to like them all. We go to movies and parties when we're sick of the theatre or pubs or night club scene. Since few have cars here, and the tubes close about 12:30, we don't usually stay out too late.

No, there aren't any mountains in England. My friend just went to Scotland to go skiing, but most people just go to Switzerland or France when the weather is good for skiing. I've never been skiing—I'd probably break every bone in my body!

All the movies here are American or French—the British film industry is not in a very big boom at present.

Write Again,
Cherri, American School in London

49 (of 139) JFORSYTH Mar. 19, 1989 at 22:36

The Yellowstone fires were devastating this year. If you were close to the park at all, your hair would be covered with ashes, you would not see more than three or four hundred feet in front of you, and your eyes would burn.

I remember when we were at Cody, Wyoming, in August. We went to Pizza Hut to eat, and when we came out, the car had a good 1/4 inch of ashes on it. You cannot drive over two or three miles without seeing burned up forest in Yellowstone Park. They say that the fires were good for the park. But whoever reads this will never see the park like it was before the fires. The fires ruined the scenery of the park.

I live in Wilsall, Mt., which is located about 100 miles north of Yellowstone Park. Some mornings you would wake up and all you would see was smoke. It cut off visibility to the Crazy Mountains which are about five miles from the house. Even in Wilsall your eyes would burn, and you could smell smoke from the fires.

The fires came so close to a town near the park called Cooke City that the fire fighters had to wet the buildings down, so they could cut down the risk of them burning up. During the fires, most people called Cooke City "Cooked" City. The town was evacuated several time during the fires.

The fires have taken a big toll on the animals. Two weeks ago my family and I went to West Yellowstone to go snowmobiling. Just driving down the highway, between Bozeman and West Yellowstone, Mt., I saw four or five dead elk. When I rode my snowmobile to Old Faithful, which is inside the park, all I saw was scorched timber and sick looking elk. The elk have no hair on their necks and they walk like 90-year-old men. I have never seen such sick animals before.

In the town of Gardiner, the elk walk down the streets like the people do. The bison eat in your front yard like cows eat out in the pasture. If you look in the March 13, 1989, *Sports Illustrated*, you will see the town of Gardiner and the elk and bison in the front yards of houses. The bison are making it better than the elk, but every time the bison leave the norther part of the park, and hunters shoot them, because bison carry the disease brucellosis.

Some people all around Yellowstone Park are feeding the elk, and the park officials are telling them that feeding them is just short term, and it will hurt the elk in the long run. Well, I think that if the people enjoy looking at the wildlife around the park, we should feed them till spring when the elk can live off the spring grasses.

Mark Magers, Wilsall H.S., Wilsall, Mt.

53 (of 139) DLATHAM Apr. 2, 1989 at 17:06

Dear Mark Magers,

I heard a lot about the Yellowstone National Park fires on the news. I didn't really think it was all that bad until I read your article.

Several years ago, we had a big fire here in Tamassee-Salem. I think it burned a little over 2,000 acres. I can remember smelling the smoke from the house. But it was nothing like the fire at Yellowstone.

Is there anything they can do about the elk? How close did the fire get to your house? Did anything get burned in Cooke City? Where do the people go when they were evacuated?

Sincerely,

Steven Kelley , 9th grade, Tamassee-Salem High, Salem, S.C.

75 (of 139) JDUSTIN Oct. 7, 1989 at 13:28
Jennifer Robinson, Port Alexander School,Port Alexander, Alaska

Port Alexander is a small fishing community on the southern tip of Baranof Island. The nearest city is Sitka which is located about seventy miles away.

One side of the bay is called tract A where the store, post office, school, docks, and so on are. There are about 100 people here and most of them live on tract B. Everyone here is white with the exception one native family. There isn't a city generator so we live without the luxuries of furnaces, refrigerators, and all the things you take for granted in a city. Instead, everyone has their own generator that may run washers, dryers, VCR's (we don't have TV), and also charges up batteries for 12 volt lights. Because we don't have electricity all the time, we have to use either wood or oil stoves.

Almost everyone here fishes for a living. If they don't own a boat, they deckhand and get 15 to 20 percent of the catch. People troll for salmon almost year round from July 1st until April 15th. The dates change a lot though.

People also longline when there are openings either for halibut or black cod. There are usually two or three twenty-four hour halibut openings a year in the spring and fall. Black cod opens in the spring sometime and closes when the quota, which also changes, is caught.

Fish and venison are both common food, and often our dads will get together and spend a day hunting for deer. Because most of us don't have refrigerators or freezers people can venison, fish, kelp pickles, and more.

Charles Turcott, Port Alexander School, Port Alexander, Alaska
Halibut

My dad owns a fifty foot wooden and fiberglass boat. With it he fishes for salmon and halibut. We usually have two 24 hour halibut openings per year (pretty short huh!). Sometimes the weather is good during the openings but the weather can also be pretty nasty. You usually have to go out halibutting, otherwise you might be a bit short on money for that year. I usually go out fishing with my dad for halibut. He gives me five to ten percent which is about $150 to $250 per opening. It isn't easy though; the openings are only twenty-four hours each so you can't waste time sleeping.

First you put chunks of herring or black cod on over a thousand hooks; then at noon the season opens. You take the boat out of the harbor with three or four people on board. At noon you "make the first set." A set is a length of line about 1/4 of a mile long with hooks spaced about 3 feet apart. The line has anchors at either end, with lines going up from the anchors to buoys. On the boat there is either a big hydraulic drum full of line, or a set of pulleys and a hydraulic wheel and 7 or 8 thirty gallon garbage cans full of line. This year I either fed the line out of the cans and through the wheel, or coiled it back into the cans.

Some of the fish that came up were really bizarre looking. For instance ratfish are shaped like a miniature shark with sand-papery skin and beady little cat eyes! And skates! Skates are flat with tapering fins on each side like wings. They also have gritty skin, and they have nasty looking tails. The tail has spikes on the end of it, and it can slowly swing its tail at you. Sometimes, if we get some on deck and don't have time to take them off, there will build up (usually right next to me) a large writhing pile of flesh and bone with several spiney, bony probing tails (probing for me, of course. Ecch!).

Of course the bottom fish (as we call the strange looking creatures that live near the bottom) are interesting, but the things you really want to see are the halibut. We usually catch a size range from 5 to 350 pounds. Of course we can't keep the little ones. Sometimes the fish will "bow" or arch their backs so it is almost impossible to pull over the side of the boat onto the deck. A halibut is a large (and hopefully huge) flat fish, brown on one side and white on the other with two eyes bulging out of the dark side of its head. They are mostly big slabs of meat, or when you catch them, muscle. They look sort of like a large blob of bread dough (with eyes), after a steam roller ran over it.

After the halibut opening comes the cleanup (the worst part). The joy of seeing the fish pile up was good then, but now it means scrubbing all the gore, slime, starfish squish, and numerous other things you wouldn't normally want to look at off the deck. It is usually raining as you take the rotten, slimy bait off the hooks. All the bait except the skin seems to have turned to jelly, and the skin doesn't want to come off. Then you have to hang the hooks back up on a metal rack. So, after five days of disgusting work you have about $200.

So I guess you've got to decide if it's worth it (I still haven't).

81 (of 139) JFORSYTH Oct. 15, 1989 at 21:13

Dear Jennifer Robinson,

I really enjoyed your piece on Port Alexander. It sounds very different from where I live. People here fish, but not for a living, mostly as a sport or recreation. They fish for trout or other fresh water fish. A lot of people come here to hunt for deer and elk, so venison is very popular meat here too. Wilsall is a small town with a population of about 250. Although we have electricity all the time, a lot of people here use wood stoves for heat in the winter. The winters are usually pretty cold so a lot of wood is used throughout the winter.

Do the kids in the families help with the fishing that is done? What kinds of things do you do there?

Sincerely,
Amy Williams

90 (of 139) LWOLLIN Oct. 24, 1989 at 18:01

Here are some responses from La Guardia High School of the Arts in NYC to the pieces from Alaska:

Pedro Miranda—

Hello, Charles—I've never heard of skate and ratfish. There aren't any creatures like that where I come from. In fact, you would have to be really lucky to find any kind of fish in the Hudson River. Even if you did, they would be too contaminated to eat anyway. From what I hear, the Alaskans are having problems of their own with that sickening oil spill problem. How complete a job did Exxon actually do in cleaning up the mess?

Joana Askey—

I live on Governor's Island, a Coast Guard base in New York City. The island is about two miles around and is located off the tip of Manhattan in the New York Harbor. Every day in order to get to school I have to take the infamous Governor's Island Ferry. That ferry drives everyone CRAZY! Especially me. For you see, the ferry and I do not get along. Sure, it's great to take boat rides every day. I love looking out over the harbor, watching the sunset (or sunrise). It gives you a chance to think. But getting to the ferry is the hard part. For one thing it is always very early or very late. Sometimes, it doesn't come at all. Once, after school, I was stuck in the ferry terminal for three and a half hours because the docks broke. Let me tell you, it was a wonderful experience.

105 (of 139) GESHERNET1 Nov. 17, 1989 at 11:52

Enclosed our files on 'Kibbutz Life' in Israel.

Student: Neta
School: Ramot Hefer (Kibbuts Maabarot, Israel)
Dear Students,

I'll try to explain to you what a kibbuts is. Kibbuts is a sort of community in which a group of people, children live together. The main idea in the kibbuts is cooperation and equality. The members of the kibbuts share almost everything. Every person or family has his own house but there is a dining room where everybody eats, and a collective laundry. The work is divided among the people and the money goes to a partnership cashbox and the money is distributed. Every family or single has his own budget and he can take money from the cashbox if he isn't with ovedraft. It is the same method with the working places....

The truth is that I don't know either why the kibbuts is called like that, but I think that it comes from gathering (in Hebrew the word is similar to the word kibbuts). Anyway I hope I explained a little more about my life and I hope you understand what a KIBBUTS is.

Write me back about your life.
Sincerely,
Neta

Education and Culture in the Kibbutz

We'll answer a few of your questions and hope that you'll get a clearer picture of our life style.

We here in the kibbutz learn like in every other regular school in the city. We learn Math, Hebrew, Bible, Literature, Physics, Biology, and so on. The main difference is that we have other activities except from regular classes. For example, talking about topics which are closer to us teenagers like drugs, or other problems which come up.

Another special characteristic is that each grade/class does more than learn together. We also have social activities. It's sort of like a boarding school—we eat together, sleep in dorms, and every once in a while (twice a week) we all go home. Each class has also home teacher. They are teachers that their main job is to help us in social and learning problems. They help us organize social activities, and they're someone to talk to....

We really love this sort of life in which everyone knows everybody and we hope that now you understand better how we live.

Anyway hope to hear from you soon and hear more about you way of life.

P.S. We eat pizza, french fries, hamburgers and all that junk food just like you. Another thing, we do eat tasty food! amazing ha?

109 (of 139) CSTUMBO Nov. 22, 1989 at 15:43

Hello, my name is Greg Johnson and my sidekick is Kevin Isaac. According to what you say about not having any privacy in a kibbuts, it would be hard for us to live in it. Where we live is like a small city. We have homes which are scattered about between the mountains. We live in the eastern part of Kentucky. We have mountains, running streams, and all sorts of different trees. The environment here is mostly wet. We have changing seasons.

One of our biggest problems in our community is the jobs. We have very few jobs. The ones we do have are mine-related. The community that we live in is called Wheelwright. Wheelwright was a booming mining camp. When the big coal companies pulled out, it left a declining economy.

We have many questions to ask you. What kind of holidays do you celebrate? Do you have a bathing facility in each room or do you all have to share one in the kibbuts? In your kibbuts, what do you use for money? Who forms the rules and carries out punishments for offenders?

We can't understand how a kibbuts could grow from technology and form jobs to keep modernized. In our country there are such groups that also band together, mostly religious groups. Also we have tribes of Indians mostly in the western part of the country, but yet we all follow the same rules set down by our government. We also use the same type of currency and this makes everything fair and equal. Everyone strives to do good for they can have a good life. This also makes the country stronger and lets it grow from technology. Jobs are formed and the country becomes more united. This system has been proved to work. We can also see the good points in a kibbuts, like you would not have homeless people. Would you rather live in America or Israel?

Your good friends,
Greg Johnson and Kevin Isaac

BREADNET

130 (of 139) CSTUMBO Feb. 5, 1990 at 16:13

A Matter of Heaviness

Although I wasn't in my school's magazine production class, I noticed that there were people in the hallway at Wheelwright High School in early January and I became interested in the visitors. When I got closer to them, I realized that some of the people in the hallway weren't speaking English and those that were speaking English had a very distinct accent. I asked a friend why they were there because I was very interested. I decided that I was most interested in the man from Ghana, so I simply walked up to him and started to talk to him. As our conversation progressed, it was as if he were interviewing me. We found each other interesting. I wanted to know about his growing up in Africa, and he wanted to know what it was like being black in eastern Kentucky. I found that he was from a program for ministers which was located in the central part of Kentucky. He had come to our school to learn more about the Appalachian region. I wasn't surprised because a similar group had visited our school before.

As our conversation continued, the minister asked me about the racial aspects of Appalachia. I told him that the race barrier is "lighter" here in ways and "heavier" in others. He then wanted some examples. If black and white persons date here then it wouldn't be very important to people it doesn't affect. It is also lighter because in some cities there are gangs and blacks and whites often fight. We don't do that at the school I attend.

I also told him the prejudice I received about being black is lighter than those I receive as a result of being from eastern Kentucky. He seemed to be shocked. So I explained to him what had happened after a crew from *48 Hours*, the CBS television show, came into eastern Kentucky to do a show that they called "The Forgotten America." Many new prejudices seemed to come out after that program was aired. Many people felt that eastern Kentucky was once again being portrayed as having only illiterate, uneducated people and people in our area were upset. There was an uproar in our county and in the state over the program. For once there had been an issue that involved black people that wasn't about race. It was about being from eastern Kentucky.

A black professor who visited our school last year said that coming from Appalachia and being black is like living with a double whammy—you have to live with two different stereotypes. Maybe he is right. I live in a place known as Hall Hollow, a two mile stretch of land, where most of the blacks in the county live. Hall Hollow is an interesting place to write about because it is a very small place in Wheelwright where black miners lived before segregation occurred. The black families still live there today with white neighbors. There are lots of memories for lots of people, black and white, in tiny Hall Hollow.

I am seventeen-years-old and I have lived in Hall Hollow back in the hills of Kentucky all of my life. It is a very intimate town because everyone knows everyone. It is so intimate that even I can trace my family back as far as four generations. People usually move to Hall Hollow and stay in Hall Hollow.

For as long as I can remember, everyone there has raised everyone else's children in one way or the other. This past year there were eight black kids to graduate and eight to go to college so I think the families have done a good job. I've had some memorable experiences in Hall Hollow. I can remember from the time I was about four when my older brother, who is two years older, and I used to sit in our yard and play with worms. I wasn't really a tomboy but I liked to do things boys did. I even made my mom buy me the same t-shirts as my brother's. I really idolized him. I still do.

Because my brother and I grew up in a single parent home, my mom tended to let us grow up free of rules. She didn't shelter us or try to make us something we weren't. Instead she let us play and get dirty and do all the things little kids do. She let us go to "the bottom." The bottom is what we people in Hall Hollow call the very first section coming into Hall Hollow. "On the hill" is, of course, on the top layer around the hillside where I live. Mom would let us go play with the other kids.

I also had a babysitter for a while until I started school. Her name was Athena Scott. She has a sister we call Plump. Plump happens to be very old and blind. They are the sisters of an excellent blind musician. I thank Mom for letting them babysit for me because I now have a very special love for older people. My brother and I and four other friends of ours, all little children, were taken care of by these people at the same time. We played, we fought, we cried, and we all loved Plump and Theeny (Athena's nickname).

I have all of my memories of my great grandfather when I started school, although he lived with us until I was nine. He leaves the most precious memory on my childhood. I remember he used to fix my brother and me a wonderful breakfast every morning before school. He bathed us, he clothed us, he whipped us, he loved us.

Living in Hall Hollow was great until I got old enough to recognize prejudices. That's when I was about ten-years-old and my mom put me in my first beauty pageant. A woman said that a Negro shouldn't have won over her baby. I knew then there were prejudices and I realized that there were even jokes about Hall Hollow. It was sometimes called "nigger hollow," but it still was home and I felt comfort in being there.

I feel like a part of my life isn't just the past, but as if it were a dream, not real, because Theeny is gone, Plump doesn't remember those days, and Great-granddaddy is gone, and having those beautiful people in my life was the best childhood a little girl from Hall Hollow could have had.

Kisha Cotton
Wheelwright High School ☐

Managing Knowledge in the Information Age

Could Computer Use Be a Form of Tracking?

By Ike Coleman

At a local high school the other day, I watched as a friend of mine who teaches there unpacked a brand new CD-ROM drive to add to the Macintosh SE and laser printer she already has in her classroom. I couldn't help but notice that the drive, like the other pieces of the Macintosh equipment, was by district policy reserved for use by the gifted and talented program. And I know that almost all the students who make up the gifted and talented program are the children of parents who are fairly affluent, many of them faculty members at nearby Clemson University, where I work. By district policy, then, the sons and daughters of the significant population of poorer parents in the area are not to have access to the best of the school's equipment. My friend, like many of the best teachers, ducks policy. "Have you ever seen a student who isn't gifted?" someone once asked her. "Never," she said. Even so, even with the best of intentions on the part of teachers, the district policy is an obstacle.

tions. Recently, I walked through another teacher's "basic" class (read "children of poorer parents") to a small room in the back, where the teacher and a few Advanced Placement students were producing a school publication on one of the district's Macintoshes. The "basic" students, waiting patiently for the teacher, had probably never used the computer, and knew they never would.

Like tracking, computer use divides along socioeconomic lines. But, because mastering the machines has become essential to success in the world beyond school, computers complicate the question of which kids will eventually make it. Though the issue is more complex than we'd like to believe, we can tell ourselves that with perseverance any student can do well in school. At least the tools for success—books, pens, and paper—are cheap. But we can't even make the pretense about computers: Poor people cannot afford them.

On the other hand, many students grow up with computers at home, computers they use for everything from electronic games, to word processing, to computer-based telecommunications. Just as children surrounded by books at home are at an advantage when they come to school, the students with computers at home obviously have an advantage over students whose parents can't afford the machines.

The issue of how computers are used at school, then, is pressing. But according to the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition in a 1989 article in the *Harvard Educational Review*—and as expected, given schools' tendency to track students along socioeconomic lines—poorer students are allowed neither the quantity nor the quality of access to computers as are more affluent students. Surprisingly, the relative prosperity of the district makes little difference: Poor students in wealthy districts get little access to the machines, just as they would in poor districts with fewer computers.

But even when poor kids are given access to the machines, the *ways* they are allowed to use them differ radically from their use by more affluent students. While advanced students use desktop-publishing software to produce literary publications, for instance, in low-track and remedial classes, populated mostly by poorer students, kids who use computers use them largely for so-called "skill and drill."

In his book *Insult to Intelligence*, Frank Smith has made the case against skill-and-drill computer work far more completely and eloquently than I can. "Drill and kill," as it's justifiably nicknamed, whether on worksheet or computer screen, teaches little that it's supposed to teach. A computerized vocabulary test, for instance, may or may not prepare students for

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Ike Coleman is director of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, a project sponsored by the Bread Loaf School of

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Has Computer Use Become a New Form of Tracking?

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standardized tests by which the school and district will be judged, but it has almost no relationship to real language use. As theorists of language and learning from James Britton on have known, students doing such work learn nearly nothing that will transfer to the real spoken and written language of their lives.

What skill-and-drill software does teach is more frightening than what it doesn't. Students performing exercises involving isolated skills are not the masters but the slaves of the computers. I've often seen students with programs that tell them things like: "John, you're a genius. Now try the next question." With such software students learn, for one thing, to be obedient to a machine, a machine that, like something out of *1984* impersonates a human being. But even without the bells and whistles, students who do computer multiple-choice exercises for countless hours of their school lives learn not to be critical thinkers. They learn not to wonder why the world of the computer screen has no relationship to their world.

That for poorer students skill and drill is often the only exposure to computer technology should disturb us deeply. As *Technology and the American Transition*, a report by the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, points out, business will adjust to the workforce it has available. If a segment of the working population has not learned the flexibility and creative thinking necessary for the ideal economy of the very near future, business will just have to make do with what it has, creating tracks for the workforce available. People who grew up poor and were badly served by schools will find jobs that ask for little talent and offer little reward. I can't help imagining that such jobs might well involve obedience to machines—one skill the workers will have learned well.

Kids, in short, who had no chance to use current technology for their own purposes at school will likely not have the chance at work. They'll have low-paying jobs, and they'll be unable to afford to expose *their* children to technology in constructive ways. Thus, schools are probably helping to cement in place an underclass, subservient to technology instead of mastering it.

> That for poorer students 'skill and drill' is often the only exposure to computer technology should disturb us deeply.

But if we want to, we can give *all* students access to powerful technology that is not expensive. Several interactive educational networks, such as BreadNet, a network for teachers and students sponsored by the Bread Loaf School of English, require only the cheapest machines (I use a $500 clone). And though on-line time is not free, teachers who have been given the time and the support necessary to learn to use networks wisely themselves can give their students inexpensive experiences, rich in reading, writing, and thought.

BreadNet supports, for students and teachers, what is called asynchronous computer conferencing, which simply means that a number of sites send writing to a central "conference" to be read by all members of the conference at their convenience. Unlike electronic pen-pal systems, such conferences allow a great deal of collaboration, among classes and groups within classes, before writing is sent—and a great deal of communication, oral and written, for the amount of writing actually transmitted.

In one short-term conference on BreadNet, called "World Class," students and teachers in all parts of the globe—from Wilsall, Mont., to London, to Lima—described for others on the network environmental problems in their country and region, and then discussed global problems and possible solutions. In addition, students composed questions for U.S. Senator Albert Gore's senior legislative assistant on global environmental issues, Rick Adcock, and sent those questions to the computer conference. Mr. Adcock answered the questions on tape, and his answers were transcribed and posted on the network.

Here is a description of local problems from Randy Boyd, Chad Hall, and Greg Johnson, students in Wheelwright, Ky., a town in one of the poorer regions of the United States: "Much of our water is being destroyed or harmed by people and major corporations here in Kentucky. The problem is a difficult one because the pollution comes from several sources. Because of all the mining that takes place here, when we have hard rains, we also have mud slides, like those that occur in California. . . . Other substances are washed into the creeks with the dirt. The sediment has lots of organic and inorganic matter in it, along with pesticides and other pollutants. Probably the most harmful is acid from pit and strip mines. . . ."

These students are communicating knowledge to a wide and diverse audience, and in the process are probably synthesizing information they had not fully formulated for themselves before. In addition, they are learning infinitely more about the basic skills than basic-skills programs teach. And they are learning computer technology—very cheaply.

Most importantly, from their work on "World Class," students from all tracks and all socioeconomic backgrounds learned that their learning and their writing could not only affect their lives, but also had the potential to change the world. After intensive reading and writing about global environmental problems, students in many schools began to take action, starting recycling centers and lobbying at the local level.

This is only one example of the kind of learning students can do cheaply with the power of technology. Every district in the United States could probably afford to make work like this available to all students. And students who have learned to be the masters of computers, to use them for their own purposes, will not only be better prepared to enter the Information Age, they will have the power to make the world more humane.

But if we don't treat them humanely, if we prevent a segment of the population from exposure to technology for such uses, that power will be lost, for this generation and for generations to come. ■

Urban and Rural: A Dialogue about Computers in Schools

TRACY WINN, *Atrium School, Watertown, Massachusetts*
IKE COLEMAN, *South Carolina Public Schools*

Dear Ike,

As a teacher in a small independent school in Watertown, Massachusetts, my general reaction to the symposium was one of hurrahs! My small community of colleagues assumes that our educational aim is for our children to learn to think inductively through experiential learning. "Inquiry-oriented learning" is a habit we aspire to. We assume, as Schwartz does, "that schools have the obligation to challenge students to create in every field they ask students to learn" (p. 51).

As a reader of these three articles, I feel giddy with the confirmation of my aims as a teacher. My giddiness is due to the realization that we are engaged in a battle (because most people don't share my aims), and that, in the authors, I have discovered some well-spoken allies.

Each article in this symposium makes assumptions that I find easy to make. Weir assumes that "learners need to develop the ability to reflect on their own thinking processes" (p. 64). Schwartz describes the "intellectual mirrors" afforded by the GEOMETRIC SUPPOSER with language I would use to describe how humans learn: "it is possible for users to probe their own understanding of a domain, as well as to devise new relationships among the objects of the domain" (p. 58). That is what kindergartners do every day in the block corner. And the LCHC authors write, "We strongly advocate instructional strategies (with or without involvement of computers) which embed practice on elements of complex activity like reading or mathematics in meaningful contexts where the constraints of the fully developed (whole) system can continuously promote their fusion in developmentally productive ways" (p. 75). My colleagues at the Atrium School are continually developing ways to allow this sort of learning.

My thoughts after reading these articles were not about computers, but about how to make it clear to those with the power to effect educational reform that these assumptions are valid and should be shared. How do we get from here to there? How can we prove that "it is no longer possible for teachers to serve as ex cathedra authorities" (Schwartz, p. 57), when our students' parents enter classrooms filled with activity centers and ask, "Where does the teacher stand?"

Dear Tracy,

We must be living on different planets. As you know, I've been working closely with teachers and students in rural South Carolina schools, most of them poor, for the last three years. Education reform has brought much change to the state: because South Carolina's schools have been in a race with Mississippi for last place in everything, there has been incredible pressure to improve them. That has translated into some good things—more money, mostly, paying for much higher teacher salaries than a decade ago, and to some extent, new technology. I was surprised to find, for instance, that every school I've visited—even the ones without air conditioning—has at least some computers. Every secondary school I've been in has a bank of computers, enough for a whole class, usually with a few others scattered around the school in other classrooms. There aren't enough machines, but the scarcity of hardware could actually work to the advantage of students. With only three or four computers for a class of twenty students, teachers who want to use the machines are going to have to give up on having everybody do the same thing at the same time; opportunities for collaborative group work, for example, may occur naturally.

I've seen this happen. A teacher of students labeled "learning disabled"—let's call him Jerry—has moved in three years from drill on phonics, Latinate grammar, spelling, and vocabulary (all this completely outside of any communicative context) to writing at an independent pace, often in collaboration with others, for publication and for electronic mail. Though now there are nearly enough machines for all students in the class, last year there weren't. That lack was one of the factors that spurred Jerry to let his students work on independent projects at their own pace. Jerry's students' facility with written language has risen remarkably. Students who, when they entered the class, could not write at all and were not expected to, now type two double-spaced pages that are not only enjoyable to read but fairly clean mechanically. Jerry has discovered that many of the students have no learning disability at all.

Jerry's work is heroic. Yet, he only has a few students at a time, about ten at most. Though the kind of work we're talking about can be done in a class of thirty, two priorities of Jerry's school, and many others, make it difficult. These priorities are: standardized test scores—the mania in every district in the state—and discipline.

As Jerry and the students moved toward a less centralized classroom, absolute quiet and order no longer existed. For a time, while everyone adjusted, the disorder was not all constructive. With ten students, the problem was manageable; with twenty-five or thirty, the adjustment might well have been more than the school administration would tolerate. Standardized test scores—and the curriculum itself, for that matter—are not a great impediment for Jerry either. The special education students are not expected to score well on tests. In fact, they often don't have to take the same tests as other students. (This exclusion serves to boost school test scores.)

There is an enormous number of other obstacles for any teacher who wants to implement the kind of learning the articles in the symposium talk about. For instance, several years ago Schwartz's idea that students should be allowed to create in every field was a possibility for any truly creative teacher. After five years of massive educational "reform" in South Carolina, it's almost impossible.

Let me give some examples. In addition to the normal, but enormous, burdens of teaching up to 150 students a day in a very poor state, teachers here are evaluated with an "instrument" that stipulates they should demonstrate, in a fifty-minute period, fifty-one "teaching behaviors" in the proper order. Students, in this vision, are worse than furniture, because, though neither students nor furniture can contribute, at least the chairs can't muck up the works. In a classroom where students are working independently or in groups on an inquiry task, teachers cannot be evaluated by this "instrument." A friendly administrator in such a classroom would say, "I'll come back when I can evaluate you." An unfriendly administrator would say, "Pack your bags, sucker." (There is no tenure in South Carolina public schools.)

Except for "enrichment" programs offered to a few "gifted and talented" students—almost a euphemism for kids whose parents are well educated and well off—all content in core courses like English, math, and now science, is cut up into skills the students must learn and teachers must document. No room for discovery here, eh? As you can imagine, a teacher who doesn't teach everybody the same skill at the same time is going to have a Herculean job of documentation. And of course there aren't any tangible rewards for such creativity; more often, a teacher will have to fight administrators as well as the documentation system.

The article by the LCHC authors is on the mark: technology as it plays out in schools here cements socioeconomic differences. For instance, students in remedial reading programs, almost all of whom are poor, use computers to answer multiple choice questions. In one reading program I saw, there weren't even any passages to read—the only texts to read were the questions themselves—incredible though that may seem. One teacher I work with agreed to teach a remedial reading program because at least she would get some computers in the classroom that she could use for other purposes. The second year of the program the computers were transformed into dummy terminals, so that it became physically impossible for her students to use the machines to create.

Most secondary schools here offer computer literacy courses, but in too many of these classes, students learn how to use computers without using them for real purposes: they learn word-processing, for example, outside the context of real writing. Meanwhile, students whose parents have computers at home have an entirely different relationship to the machines; these kids are used to being the masters of the technology instead of the opposite.

The picture as I've painted it is bleak, but I do see real glimmers of hope. The governor of the state and some factions within the State Department of Education have begun to support, with words and money, conditions in schools that would allow for teacher innovation. Making those intentions a reality will be difficult. On a statewide scale, with top-down implementation, it's easier to force teachers to abide by a set curriculum than it is to foster creativity.

I have a question for you about one of the real obstacles here to the kinds of learning discussed in the symposium. Even if there were room in the system for true inquiry, teachers here are rarely exposed to the idea. The notion that understanding is something more than what teachers have, and students must get, just doesn't make the rounds here. Where does it come from at the Atrium school?

Dear Ike,

So we aren't talking about computers and kids. We are talking about how far our teachers' practice is from "inquiry learning." Which must mean that we don't see computers as the essential means for change. The authors of the symposium made some leaps, while we are stuck back at the assumptions behind the leaps.

Your report of the situation in South Carolina overwhelmed me. I have been trying to compare our situations to find out what makes it possible for the teachers I work with to think of creating as part of the learning process. Two factors that keep getting in the way of my looking any further are affluence and geographical location. The Atrium is located on the outskirts of a city with a college or university on every corner that doesn't have a bookstore. As an independent school, Atrium's educational policy is not determined by the state. Standardized testing is being phased out of the school. Because of where they live, the teachers here have access to ideas about inquiry in a way that those in Clemson do not.

The teachers are expected to have and to find new ideas. They have the freedom to create their own curricula, within a list of guidelines (which was put together by one of the teachers). They know that they themselves are learning from the process of creating, implementing, and assessing the success of their own curricula. They know, firsthand, the value of inquiry and experiment in the learning process.

There is a computer in each class of twenty-two children, and a small collection of barely operative computers in a separate room. But computers have played almost no part in the Atrium's development toward creative group work and inquiry learning. I say almost, because some of the teachers in the upper grades (four through six) first became aware of inquiry learning through computer programs like LOGO.

After your description of the obstacles Jerry has had to overcome, it seems that the teachers at the Atrium have nothing to fight against. But here is the irony: despite our freedom, we also answer to a system. Because of where the school is, its students are expected to excel. The community demands top performance from its children, and that translates into educating them in the way their parents were educated. Most of the families pay to send their children to the school; very few were educated the way we are trying to educate their children. We must educate parents to value approaches that are different from those they experienced as students. In our case, the legislators are the parents. Their experience in the field of education brings them no closer to trusting innovation than the state board in South Carolina.

So where do computers fit in this discussion? Because I think they do.

Later the same day:

Dear Ike,

Is there any way that you can get your hands on Tuesday, March 7th's *Wall Street Journal*? The front page article is about using computers to transform grade school education. The closing quote from the inventor of LOGO, Seymour Papert, is, "It isn't just a question of what's most effective in education. Computers give our society, for the first time, the choice of deciding whether we want to produce rote-learning people who do disciplined, routine work, and follow orders, or do we want to produce critical creative minds." Now I have to react to that quote. I don't think this is the first time we have been given that choice and I don't think we should make a choice between discipline and creativity. I also don't think computers have given our society that choice. We want to encourage the development of disciplined, critical, creative minds. Now how are computers helping us, or going to help us, do this?

Dear Tracy,

I just read the article in the *Wall Street Journal*, and I think you're absolutely right: computers have not given us the choice of whether to produce people who have creative, critical minds—which, as you say, must also be disciplined minds—or who follow orders. But I do think that once we've made the choice, computers can help us do either. I've seen class after class of students who probably would not pay attention to a teacher lecturing about vocabulary words take an individualized vocabulary test on a computer screen—somnolently, but quietly and obediently.

And you and I have both seen the power of telecommunications, for example, to bring the richness of the world into the classroom. The question, it seems to me, is how to avoid using the power of technology to enforce rote learning of unconnected skills and, instead, to harness that power for the kinds of real learning advocated in the symposium.

I'm also tempted to see the question in economic terms. A school supported largely by property taxes in an impoverished county in South Carolina is simply not going to pay $485 for the LEGO LOGO toys for four students discussed in the *Wall Street Journal* article.

Dear Ike,

As a teacher/researcher who has introduced the use of telecommunications to the writing programs of four classrooms at the Atrium, I have seen slow and uneven change. I am working with young, enthusiastic teachers who, because the administration keeps hands off, are in a position to take risks and innovate. They understand the potential computers offer for all students; thus, we are a few steps closer to removing the threat of technology reinforcing the rote learning of unconnected skills for less privileged children.

But, the technology itself has been a huge stumbling block. Some teachers are computerphobic. Those who are not phobic need hours of training and experience before they have the confidence to make the computer part of their classroom setup. The acquisition and maintenance of enough computers are obvious obstacles.

And there is something else: in the same way that writers need to feel ownership of their work, teachers need to feel ownership of the changes that are brought to their classrooms. As long as the teachers are dependent upon me for information or technical help with their computers, the computer does not become fully integrated into the classroom program, but remains a complicated overlay to what is really going on in the curriculum.

One teacher here works independently. As a result, she is enriching her telecommunications project in diverse and creative ways. But in order to do so, she needed confidence, desire, funding, technical support, and the freedom to do her own thing. She also needed, and continues to need, time. She wants to teach all twenty-two children how to use the word-processing program. She has one computer. The numbers, as they did in Jerry's class, necessitate group work and also remove her further from the "ex cathedra authority role" that Schwartz refers to. She is going to try teaching a few children and then arranging it so that those children will teach others, until the children have made the use of the word-processor part of the kid-culture in the classroom.

The way that she sets up the kids-teaching-kids will determine which children become deeply involved and which barely have access to both the information and the computer. The success of this learning situation will depend on the teacher's vision, her awareness of her classroom as a place that can reinforce previously existing inequalities of educational achievement, and her ability to balance classroom needs with the needs of individuals. If, for her initial teaching group, she chooses children who have previous computer experience (perhaps they have computers at home), she will have confident, enthusiastic models, and she will be giving the "haves" a little more authority over the "have-nots." If she chooses children who have not demonstrated an affinity for computers, she may jeopardize the process because the "teachers" may lack confidence and desire. If she sets it up so that in order to learn from the original group, children sign up, those who are either less interested or less confident may select themselves out of the process by not signing up.

Yes, Ike, economics is also an enormous issue. The LCHC authors' suggestion of making the technology available like old radio kits in the department store is a start, but we have to make choices about everything from state policy to the form of a day's specific lesson plan before we can use computers to "broaden the base of literacy" (LCHC, p. 84). Maybe if researchers keep their papers coming, we will have the impetus to use computers as a tool for change.

Telecommunications and social action: The birth of World Class

by William W. Wright, Jr.

You have probably heard the stories about how the Chinese students in Boston faxed clippings describing the Tiananmen Square massacre back to their incredulous friends outside, and inside, Beijing. A few weeks before this event that Ted Koppel beamed to our living rooms, former Secretary of the Treasury Blumenthal was on "This Week with David Brinkley." When asked about the democratic reform movement in China, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Bloc countries, he said that it all stems from one event: the invention of the computer chip.

Last week Jacob Morris, an eleventh grader at the Governor's School for Science and Math in South Carolina, called and said that he had a job at the school that allowed him to work on a school-related project. He asked if I had come up with any way of distributing the transcript of a conference we had on BreadNet last May called "World Class." When I told him I hadn't, he said, "It's incredible stuff. It needs to get out to more people. I have it all downloaded on disk. If you'd like, I will, as my work-study job, format it, correct the spelling, desk-top publish it, and help you distribute it."

What transcript was he talking about? A computer conference (one of BreadNet's series of computer conferences) called World Class that lets geographically dispersed people or classrooms work on a task. A topic is created—the destruction of rain forests. People read notes put up by others and add pieces of their writing at their convenience. It is not like telephone conference calls in that people do not have to be on at the same time. You transcend distance and time and have a written record of the discussion.

We announced the computer conference call for "World Class" in BreadNet's monthly newsletter last spring:

> Starting the week of May 1, we will have an international discussion of a global environmental problem: the destruction of tropical rain forests. Teachers and students from South America, someone from Capitol Hill, and an expert from a major environmental group here in Washington will be participating. We will prepare for the discussion by reading an article in the December, 1988, issue of *National Geographic*. If you need a copy, let us know by Tuesday, April 25th, and we will mail you one.
>
> The online discussion will take place concurrently with an Academic Contest being held May 6, 7, 8 at Colegio F.D. Roosevelt, an overseas American School in Lima, Peru. Teams of students from American Schools in South America will arrive in Lima on Saturday to have individual and team essay contests. To support our online conference, the topic for the team competition is "The Exploitation of the Earth."
>
> Here is how the conference will proceed:
>
> Monday, May 1. Read or have teams of students read the 12/88 *National Geographic*. Start putting together comments or questions for an "expert."
>
> Tuesday, May 2: We will set up a subconference called "World Class" and ask for comments and questions.
>
> Wednesday, Thursday, May 3, 4: Online discussion and questions.
>
> Friday, May 5: Bill Wright takes questions to experts and begins to post answers.
>
> Saturday, May 6: Classes from South America read the printouts and add comments.
>
> Sunday, Monday, May 7, 8: Discussion continues.
>
> Tuesday, May 9: Essays from Lima and comments from John Elder are posted. World Class is dismissed.

As it turned out, the Academic Contest planned for Lima had to be cancelled. A terrorist group in Peru began bombing in the Lima area. School administrators in places like Sao Paulo and Caracas decided that it was too dangerous for teams of students to fly in. Undaunted, two South American schools (one in Lima and one in Santiago) had the contest anyway—on the network. Many other schools around the globe were able to join in.

That first World Class conference became an excellent example of the potential for linking classrooms around the globe to share resources and exchange ideas. We had snags to work out (how to adjust for too much information at once), but it was a success. As students from the coal mining region in eastern Kentucky compared their plight to the slash-and-burn farmers in the tropics, no small amount of critical thinking took place. Biology teachers from North Carolina responded to eleventh graders in Virginia about biodiversity. A Washington professional put up ideas about debt-for-nature swaps. Students in New York put up more places to write than any one environmental group could possibly come up with. A librarian conducted an online search and listed twenty or so excellent magazine articles. An English professor posted a syllabus for English teachers to use for an elective course next year.

People of all ages, in many countries, were using writing to try to deal with a problem that affects us all. Computer science teachers in Lima and Santiago worked with English teachers. Fifteen essays from Chile, part of the international essay exchange that we hope will continue next year, summarized the ideas. The transcript of "World Class" is there—richer than any textbook—for people to dial into and use. We see the event as a prototype of a bigger collaborative project for 1989-90. (A November, 1989, conference discussed in this issue included Rick Adcock, Senator Gore's global environmental specialist, as an online guest. A conference in March and April, 1990, will link several networks around the globe.)

One of the benefits of having students take part in an electronic network is that it gives them a purpose for producing a piece of writing, something we've been advocating for years. But World Class has given students and teachers more than just a purpose for writing. As John Elder said in one of his conference summary notes, these computer conferences produce a "community of concern." The tone of some of the notes and essays sent by students taking part in the computer conference indicated that they were gravely concerned about the destruction of rain forests, the strong evidence of global warming, and other ways that we are exploiting the planet they live on. Their writings showed an awareness of the complexities of trying to correct these problems.

They learned a lot from peers and teachers around the globe. And they acted. Many wrote to congressmen or organizations that their peers in distant places had suggested. Many students started school environmental clubs, examined local issues, and began to recycle. They were serious, and they showed that, like the faxes used to send information into China, electronic networks and computer conferences can be tools for learning to write and think—and for social action.

William Wright is the director of BreadNet.

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ACTION on "WORLD CLASS"

The richness of the interactive writing posted during the conference can be understood only by reading the complete transcript. Following are excerpted pieces from the notes to give a flavor of the online action.

4 (of 8) KHOLVIG May 2, 1989 at 9:36
Thanks to our school club, SOP (Save Our Planet), I am able to pass the following information on to all of you:
Currently, there is a drive to collect 16 million signatures for a petition demanding a halt to all cutting of Old Growth forests. Here are some organizations crucial to saving the forests.

Environmental Defense Fund, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010
Rainforest Action Network, 300 Broadway, Suite 29, San Francisco, CA 94133
New England Tropical Rainforest Project, P.O. Box 73, Strafford, VT 05072

FOR MORE INFORMATION write for The Tropical Forest Information Packet, which includes FALL 1988 "Catalyst" (a special issue that focuses on the tropical forest and community based economics), a six page annotated bibliography, a list of national and international organizations, and a copy of the petition to save the trees. Send $5.00 to Institute for Gaean Economics, 64 Main St., Montpelier, VT 05602.
Will be adding our questions and comments to the forum later in the day.

10 (of 14) KHOLVIG May 2, 1989 at 12:29
Reactions to "WORLD CLASS"
FROM: Students at Clarkstown High School South; West Nyack, New York
Karen Schatten, representing SOUTH'S project group:
Brazil noted that they, like other countries in the past, should have the right to use, abuse and destroy their environment as they see fit. This is not a valid rationale; it does not excuse or lessen the impact of the destruction that is occurring. In the past, the environment was considered second to business and industry because our society was both ignorant and apathetic towards the danger such abuse would reveal in future years. But now that environmental conservation is internationally recognized as a serious global concern, cooperation and action should be combined in order to find a solution acceptable to our planet.

QUESTIONS: FROM CLARKSTOWN SOUTH GROUP
1. Are some of these so called "global issues" actually local issues? Will our energy and garbage problems on a local level, if handled properly, have any effect on the global problems? Or have things gotten too out of control? Should we start by examining our daily consumption habits or by attacking the corporations and governmental policies that make it all possible and acceptable?
2. Is the problem of the disappearing rain forests any worse or more threatening than that of the disappearing American wilderness and forests?
3. Is the problem of the destruction of the rain forest considered a high priority item by government officials? How does it rank when stacked up against other issues such as the homeless problem, the drug problem, and AIDS?

18 (of 25) RWILLIAMS May 2, 1989 at 21:50
Dear World Class participants:
What follows are letters from juniors and seniors at Franklin County High School in Virginia. Some are in my English class; others are in an advanced biology class and belong to a "Save our Environment" club at school. I haven't discussed the issue formally with these students although we had some informal conversations after they read the *National Geographic* article. Because one purpose of articles such as *N. Geo.*'s is to inform people and perhaps change their perceptions (and even their actions), I wondered how these students would react to the article as individual readers, rather than as students working together on a project. As readers they have different backgrounds and beliefs.
Letter 3
Will the Rain Forest Survive?

It's a very good question. From things I've read and seen, it seems too late. As I looked at the maps and charts that showed the amount of land burned for agriculture vs. protected, I felt even more that this was nearing a hopeless cause. I just don't think we understand what the rain forest is or does for us. There are thousands of unknown plants and animals that we kill. Total microcosms of species of exotic animals live in the rain forest. We have even brought extinction to species that existed only in that one place in the forest....The destruction of the rain forest is a good metaphor for the lack of respect we have for everything except profit. If we would listen to the Indians instead of exploiting them, we could learn many extremely important uses for the plants we destroy. It's too bad that injustice is only righted when those of us who aren't exploited are as mad as those who are.

Mark Johnson

Letter 5

...Once a plot of rain forest is destroyed, it will be hundreds of years before it returns again. With poor farming habits the land may lose its potential for growth forever. The only realistic solution to save the rain forest is to talk with money. Educate the natives, and make it worth their while to maintain the forests. It is possible to save this vital habitat and satisfy the Brazilian economy as well, but it has to be done immediately. We are running out of time and rain forests.

Christy Williams

40 (of 43) LIMA May 5, 1989 at 1:35
Dear (WORLD) CLASSmates,

Here in Peru, when the terrorists want to play havoc on civilized society, they just "blow up" a couple of power pylons, and the government then has to reroute and ration a lessened amount of electricity until the pylons are repaired. Our school is in a residential section of Lima, so we get many fewer hours of electricity than the more industrialized parts of town.

And, I guess that brings me to the point I want to make about the "rain forest problem" here in South America from the point of view of a 40-year-old adult living in Peru, where we do share a substantial portion of jungle terrain with Brazil.

Peru, right now, is undergoing so many severe crises (terrorists, galloping inflation, devalutaion, drug trade, migration to the capital) that the average man on the street perhaps is not even aware of a "rain forest problem" let alone a possible solution. He needs to feed his family.

I know for my family and me (a normal U.S.-type family), we are constantly bombarded with another level of survival that for us to think about the "survival of the planet" is really beyond our daily comprehension.

Maybe, if I were to write this during a "normal" week, I wouldn't sound so negative. But in all reality, here in South America, the problems the continent faces on a daily basis disallow the global awareness you all have been writing about. Hopefully, the essays by our students here (and the ones in Chile) can contradict my response and give some youthful insight into the problems

John S. Lakatos
Curriculum Computer Coordinator
The American School of Lima, Peru

42 (of 43) May 5, 1989 at 8:51
Hello to all of you!
We in the desert Southwest share a problem with those of you in the cities. Even though we can see the pictures, it is hard for us to really know what the rain forest is like, sitting here in the middle of a desert where the only trees are those planted by man. Our closest forests are 90 to 100 miles away and those are much, much drier than even the other forests close to all of you. There are still many species of cactus in our forests....

You should be hearing more from my students soon.

Ken Leupold from
Deming, New Mexico

49 (of 54) CSTUMBO May 5, 1989 at 15:14
World Class Conference:

The more that we read about the destruction of the rain forest in Brazil, the more that we are struck with the similarities between that situation and our own.

1. For more than a hundred years, the people here in eastern Kentucky survived by farming. Much of the land was not suitable for farming since it was largely steep hillside, but farmers cleared the trees and planted crops anyway. A great deal of valuable top soil was washed away when spring rains came.
2. The people soon turned to logging, cutting trees that had grown for centuries on this land.
3. In the early 1900's outsiders similar to those absentee owners and land barons in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro came to mine coal. One of the tenant farmers in Brazil has said that he had been there for three years and still hasn't met the owner.

People in eastern Kentucky have not only not met the owners, but in many cases, they simply do not know who the owners are. Despite the riches that come from the ground, the region remains poor. Harry Caudill, one of our region's best known writers has said, "Where you find coal, you will find poverty."

We believe that what is going on in Brazil is more complex than it appears at first glance. None of us here wants the environment destroyed. We do not like what has happened to our own land. It is so extensive that the full magnitude of the devastation cannot be understood from the ground. To really understand, you have to fly over eastern Kentucky in a helicopter....

Two forces seem at work in Brazil: the poor people looking for a way to survive and those who come to find tin and gold and exploit the land and the people. Different motivations are at work. Caught are those who are searching for a way to live and the Indians whose culture and way of life are being destroyed. The scenario is not a new one. Unfortunately, we don't seem to have learned from our history—from what has been done to the Appalachian people and the American Indian. People in eastern Kentucky who have tried to find a way to survive are victims as are some of the people in Brazil. It is easy to blame them for the destruction of the rain forests from here where food is a given, where shelter and warmth are assumed. The answers—the lasting answer—will, we suspect, be more difficult to find.

Journalism Class
Wheelwright High School

70 (of 73) WWRIGHT May 12, 1989 at 13:18

John Elder said, "It feels as if the 90's are our last big chance to protect diversity of habitats and species." That brings an idea to mind. John Lakatos in Lima and I have talked about trying to set up a larger telecomputing project—a World Class so that more overseas schools could be brought in to use this technology the way that we have. I'd like to propose that we work together to have another "event" next year on the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. I hope that we can have online reading groups, discussion, sharing of resources, online guests, and another international essay exchange. The Nature Conservancy has talked to us about publishing the best essay in its monthly magazine and sharing more of its resources (for example, giving us more articles to put online and letting us talk to their experts).

I hope this community of writers (the people in Ken Holvig's classes in New York, Carol Stumbo's in Kentucky, the classes in Raleigh, Lima, Santiago, London, and the many other places reading this) can work together next year on an even larger World Class conference. I have to run off to a face-to-face meeting. Funny. Right now I find this online one much more compelling. —Bill Wright

73 (of 73) JFORSYTH May 13, 1989 at 21:45
A couple of comments from Wilsall, MT:
Dear Wheelwright,

After reading your comment on the rain forest we found that we can relate to what you are saying because much of the same thing is going on here in Montana. Logging corporations are destroying thousands of acres of timber that cannot be replaced with the snap of a finger. This problem of deforestation is already occurring nearly everywhere now. If something isn't done about this, the world will be in serious danger. Instead of concentrating on making a profit from the earth, we should be more concerned about saving our natural resources....

Juniors,
Wilsall High School

Call for papers
Foxfire Heinemann-Boynton/Cook Series

For a series of books on student-centered, experiential learning processes in the classroom, Foxfire is looking for good examples of student projects clustered around literature, video and radio, storytelling, primary research, music and publishing. The emphasis should be on student ownership, language development, real audiences or ends, and tying projects into curriculum requirements. If you or your students would like to contribute anecdotes or longer pieces on successful projects, please contact Susan Walker immediately at Foxfire, P.O. Box B, Rabun Gap, GA 30568; 404-746-5319.

Cross-Age Tutoring

"I love helping these students out on their Reading": The Cross-Age Tutoring Project

by Susan W. Walker

Although South Carolina is a small state, it has a broad range of geography and subcultures. The mountains and piedmont of the upstate gradually smooth out into low rolling sandy hills toward Columbia, the capital and central part of the state, and flatten absolutely out towards the subtropical coast—called the "lowcountry." Individual pocket communities dot each geographical region, and each has its own distinctive features, accents, and perceptibly different experience of South Carolina history.

It is, therefore, difficult to write about the South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring project as a single, cohesive, unified project. Every site, every context has been different. And no single site is the same two years running. During the project's three-year span sites have been added, dropped, expanded. The only things the sites have in common, in fact, are the rural settings and the premise that a language-saturated environment will help kids use language more successfully in school than a language-poor environment.

Two sites offer hope of becoming institutionalized: Tamassee-Salem High School, in the hilly upstate, and Branchville Elementary and High School (Orangeburg School District #8), in the flat, sandy midsection south of the state capital. They are the focus of this article. Bread Loaf Writing Grants Director Dixie Goswami has said that the projects in this program "go beyond peer tutoring or cross-age tutoring by giving children and young adults a chance to describe and reflect (in writing) on language and learning. We want Bread Loaf News to be a clearinghouse for information about interactive writing projects. We urge people who are already doing anything like cross-age tutoring to write to Bread Loaf News."

If teachers write to the magazine with questions about building interactive learning into their classrooms or schools, we'll produce a question-and-answer column in upcoming issues. Anyone interested in learning more about interactive writing projects or in starting one should write to Elspeth Stuckey for a packet of information at: 115 C Turner Hall, A-Wing, P.O. Box 3151, S.C. State College, Orangeburg, SC 29117. Bread Loaf students who would like to apply for up to $200 in financial support for their interactive writing projects should contact Writing Grants Program Director Dixie Goswami, in care of the English Department, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634.

On a trip to Branchville:

With her sense of what a fleeting thing is a school period, Mildred Able hurries seven or eight kids into the van. These high-school students move deliberately, at their ages resistant to herding—yet they cooperate good-spiritedly enough. As Mildred Able puts the van in gear for the ten-minute drive to Branchville Elementary School, her passengers talk quietly or joke more noisily, each clutching a notebook and writing materials.

While his teacher carefully navigates the rough country roads and unmarked turns, tenth-grader William talks, a bit shyly, about tutoring the sixth-grade partner waiting on the other end: "We read stories and ask questions—main ideas about characters and stories. I like being a tutor. I make her read more, and it has improved my reading." Has he always been a reader? "I'm reading a little more on my own. It's changed my feeling a little about reading."

Once there, the kids pile out of the van much faster than they clambered in, heading straight for the sixth-grade class they tutor twice a week, every week. The sixth-graders are students of Florence Brandyburg and Vera Patterson; Mrs. Brandyburg supervises the session along with Mildred Able. The high-school students pair off with the sixth-graders, who bring out whatever book the younger ones have chosen, and they immediately begin their fifteen-minute reading session. The kids settle down at once; they act as if their time is important, as if this matters.

Recalling my own elementary-school awe, I asked Mrs. Brandyburg how the sixth-graders reacted at first to the idea of high-school tutors: "First they were a little apprehensive because they didn't know exactly what was going on. After we got into the program things worked out fine."

In the classroom, tutors and sixth-graders read to each other, some in fits and starts, some with more assurance. When the younger students hit a snag, the high-school students coach them through it, calling on their growing expertise as readers and as tutors. Sixth-grader Ronnie likes baseball books. When he finds a word he doesn't know in his reading, or when his tutor Leonard reads to him an unfamiliar word, Leonard will help him with it. Ronnie says that the program "is okay. I like to work with students because they be more fun. They'll stop. Because a teacher won't stop." Tenth-grader Leonard appreciates his tutee's difficulties because he knows that this program works both ways: "I be interested in reading 'cause I'm helping him to read, and I'm learning too."

On the van ride back to the high school, students either chat or write in their notebooks about the session; some write about it on paper or with computers when they get back for the last few minutes of the period. The high-school students and the sixth-graders also use electronic mail to send messages to Dr. Kenneth Alston, a scientist and professor at Benedict College and the project director for 1988-89, about their work with the sixth-graders. One high-school tutor wrote Alston:

> So far I have read two chapter from every book I have read to her. When we started this project we read from the SRA, this is a sheet in which it has about ten paragraphs. It also has many thing concerning the paragraphs. For example we use synonym, definition. Well I think for myself I am not a great teacher. But I am improving. Yes I have had some experience with computer. The little information I have is by observing other people use the computer. By the way I would be interested in coming to Benedict and have a look at your laboratory and the computers you work with.

Are there signs that the students care about what they're doing? Mildred Able says, "They're always coming and asking me 'Are we going today, are we going today?' Once they get here and get in, they get started. They don't get bored." She thinks one of the biggest benefits of the program for the tutors is that "it gives them a good feeling to come over and say they helped someone, that they are reading the books to the sixth-graders. It gives them a good feeling to be teachers for a couple of minutes. When they come over they're eager."

What about the sixth-graders? Florence Brandyburg laughs, "They light up. They want people in. And when the high-school students look for their partner, one of my students will ask me, 'Well, who's going to work with me?'"

Their teachers called the Branchville sixth-graders this year "double hitters" because "they're getting hit from both sides. They're the tutors and the tutees." An unusual aspect of the program was pioneered at this site. Sixth-graders who are tutored by high-school students also tutor the "compensatory first-graders." The sixth-graders have an especially good rapport with the first-

Sixth-grader Tara (left) works with tutor Crystal at Tamassee-Salem.

graders they tutor, says Mrs. Brandyburg: "They can relate to the situation themselves since Mrs. Able's high-school class comes to read to *them*. They know what it's like." One sixth-grade tutor sent E-mail to Ken Alston about her session with her first-grader:

> I like to work with the first-graders. I work with Janey West. She is a nice person to work with. She answers the question right that I ask her. This Wenseday Janey and I will be working on the computer in Mrs. Brandburg class. On Monday and Wenesday we go to the first-graders and read to them. On Thursday and on Tusedays the high school come over and reads to us. I read a story to Janey. I read a story called: *We Like Kendergarden.* First I read the story. Then I asked question. Nexted She answerd the question. She answerd a lot of questions right.

After the tutoring session, ninth-grade Danielle commented, "Besides some of the aggravation, I love working with Frances. We get along. I always have liked to read." Have she and her tutee had any problems? "It's hard finding books we like." What else does she like about the program? "We write letters to Dr. Alston. That's fun learning new things. I can learn and do them."

One-room schoolhouses

The South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Project is just one example of a school interactive writing project. In this project older students tutor younger ones in reading, and they write observations about their progress to an outside adult working with them. (Some sites in the project have also had children tutoring and writing about math and science. This article focuses on reading and writing.) The project combines two key elements: students with a position of authority and responsibility toward their audience, and integration of reading and writing.

After some training in how to conduct tutoring sessions and keep field notes, tutors help tutees select a book they will enjoy, talk to their tutees about story outcomes, ask them open questions to check comprehension, help them with particular problem words, and so on. And they write: letters to tutees, letters to site coordinators about what happened at tutoring sessions and commenting on their students' progress, and tutoring journals. Some sites use telecommunications to send letters. The younger children do similar kinds of writing, including such things as crossword puzzles of vocabulary words, and their own story endings.

Clemson University Professor and Bread Loaf Writing Grants Director Dixie Goswami says, "I understand the roots of the project more easily when I think of what the best of the one-room schoolhouses must have been like, with pupils helping each other as a matter of course and describing progress—or lack of it—to the teacher."

Furthermore, Goswami says, "We can look at this project as a small but important part of the school reform effort. Harry Levin was quoted in *Education Week* as saying that peer tutoring has been demonstrated to have more benefits to children's learning than reduced class size or increased length of school day or year. That's worth attending to."

In a report for the Center for Policy Research in Education Report Series (June 1987), Levin pointed out the advantages of peer or cross-age tutoring for all students, especially the disadvantaged or minority students in a multi-ethnic classroom:

> Peer tutoring has been shown to be an unusually effective approach for disadvantaged youngsters (Madden and Slavin 1987:9-15). Among its advantages are the facts that it is flexible in allowing older children to tutor younger ones or more advanced students at the same level to tutor their colleagues, and the tutors often learn as much as those whom they are tutoring.
>
> Finally, it is an ideal strategy for heterogeneous student groupings, since those more knowledgeable are tutors to those who need to master the material. Cooperative learning is another effective strategy for enhancing learning among diverse groups (Cohen 1986; Slavin 1983). Students are given groups assignments and rewards are given for group proficiency, providing incentives for the more able students to help those who need assistance.

As a tutor in the program at Tamassee-Salem said, "I just find [reading] easier now. It's learning with each other. It's easier to learn with someone."

Background

Based on a model Shirley Brice Heath developed for an Hispanic community in California, the South Carolina project focuses on native speakers working with each other to improve language and literacy skills—using literacy to improve literacy. Over the three years of the project various configurations and sites have been tried, matching up different age groups in different settings, in school and out, tutoring English, science, and math.

Some sites were discontinued because lack of internal support meant that the program would probably not become institutionalized. By the third year, it looks as though the two major sites—Tamassee-Salem High School in upstate South Carolina, and Orangeburg School District #8 in the lower part of the state—will probably institutionalize the pilot project in some form. These are two very different school settings, serving two different constituencies. What's in it for these schools and these students?

Elspeth Stuckey was the project director for 1987-88, took a year's leave of absence as a Fulbright Scholar in Liberia, and is back as the director for the duration of the project. Cross-age tutoring has a built-in appeal for

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school districts, Stuckey says, "Because it's *cheap*. It just doesn't cost much money, so those ways of teaching reading and writing can become usual." Tutoring sessions don't require expensive materials or packaged programs, just a good selection of books and other reading materials, paper, pencils and pens, and some money for postage to write to the outside adult about the tutoring sessions.

Ken Alston (at computer) works with Branchville teachers Florence Brandyburg (left) and Mildred Able (right).

Scheduling, logistics

The Branchville site required much ingenuity to implement, yet the superintendent, principals, teachers and students joined forces to make it work. District Superintendent Nelson Perry solved his transportation problem by hiring a teacher's aide to drive a van of high-school tutors to Branchville Elementary School twice a week. Since the aide could teach as well as double as a school-bus driver—and South Carolina now requires that adults, not high-school students, drive buses—the district found a way to make the most cost-effective use of the cross-age teacher.

Transportation isn't a problem at all in cases where sixth-graders tutor first-graders—also at Branchville—and ninth-graders tutor sixth-graders next door, at Tamassee-Salem. And interactive writing projects needn't be limited to such configurations: they can happen within a grade level, a classroom, a community.

Nelson Perry thinks that scheduling is the least of his problems: "If children are weak in basic skills we have the freedom to schedule them to get the help they need. Anytime you do anything different it's a hassle, but we could conquer hassle. The principals and I got together and worked it out."

Calling Perry "a model superintendent," Stuckey said, "All the program requires is shuffling some schedules in ways that don't seem to be usual, but as soon as you've done it you've set the precedent. And I think one of the things Dr. Perry is realizing is that the project is a strategy for teaching reading and writing."

Adults as encouraging models

The outside adult for the student "fieldworker" or tutor to write to serves an important function in this tutoring model. In responding to the students' reports on tutoring sessions, the adult models language use for the student, suggests strategies for tutoring, and encourages the student's own problem solving. The adult needn't be a language researcher, an ethnographer, or even a college graduate, as long as he or she has the time to respond faithfully and encouragingly to the tutors. In the South Carolina program Elspeth Stuckey, Kenneth Alston and Ike Coleman (Director of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network) have served as the outside adults. In another situation a retired person or a local community member with enough time to devote to the project might be likely prospects.

A note from an adult to the tutors might read:

> You all will have to become writers to let the rest of the world know what you know.... I have just a few things to remind you. Remember to be patient with your little kids. Remember to take field notes after the tutoring session. Remember that your ideas are very important so tell me what you see and what you think. And, finally, remember that you are a team and that the little kids are *learning* how to read. Learning happens in strange ways. You all are giving these kids a chance.

A Tamassee-Salem ninth-grader commented: "I ask Elspeth for suggestions for what I can do. We write at least once a week. When she writes she puts more details and explains in detail what she wants to know. Because of writing to her, now I pay more close attention to my writing. I like writing [to an outside adult] better because we can say what we want to say and not be afraid of saying what we feel."

Since the outside adult is not an authority figure or someone who gives grades, the student feels less inhibited about what or how he or she might say something. Tutors probably also feel a stronger sense of doing real work than if they were writing to their classroom teacher, for whom most of their school work is done. And writing to someone outside the context of the classroom, with whom they have no shared knowledge or understanding, makes kids aware that they have to provide information to make themselves understood.

Making plans, taking charge

The students also write to the adults to plan future sessions and try out their ideas for improving their tutees' performance. A Tamassee-Salem tutor wrote to this year's site coordinator Ike Coleman:

> The Tutor class is great I have Been doing different things for Artie. I have Been making questions for him. this is a great course to help out students like this. When I have a chance I am going to the Main-Library to get some material for these students like different types of stories....I love helping these students out on their Reading I have made a plan book for

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> Artie. Are we going to have a tutor class next year.

Elspeth Stuckey notes that in tutors' letters to the adults:

> A usual pattern is for students to progress from hesitant banality to making plans to making requests. A student will write in early field notes and letters: "I am having fun." Soon, she will write: "My tutee needs a magic marker and paper. We are writing a story." Then, she will assert: "Send me a computer. I will give you my allowance every week. I can do much more with a computer."

In a paper presented with Shirley Brice Heath at the American Educational Research Association this year, Stuckey described this progression from sketchy reporting to long-range planning as "the casting of self in events—the planning ahead with an entire cast of learners in the community." Such a progression seemingly stems from cooperative learning and interactive writing projects, and "it can provide a high-return alternative to the current isolation of 'ownership' for individual students and lonely teachers—all too often cut off from learning with their colleagues."

After the training session with the project director and subsequent work with adults and tutees, some tutors thoroughly absorb the principles of ethnographic field work into their lives. A Branchville student wrote her mentor Elspeth Stuckey the following July:

> Sometime I wish I can just teach the kids for summer so when they get back in school they will know how to read better and put their skills to work. "O" By the way, I heard that you want to know how was my summer. First of all, I was invited to a wedding plus it was fun to see every family together again. The most important thing was to learn how other family do things in their own culture….

Signs of success: motivation

It isn't so much what the kids say as what they do that indicates that something is working. During a 1987-88 Tamassee-Salem tutoring session teacher Den Latham left the room in order to discuss the kids' work. While he talked out in the hall his students quietly continued their tutoring session. They didn't get rowdy or lose control—unusual in a class with a number of troubled kids.

Latham said that generally he could leave one group of kids in his classroom to check on the other in the library and not have to worry. They liked what they were doing. In fact, he said, "They get so caught up in their reading that it's sometimes hard to pull them back and get them to settle down to their writing."

These are the same kids that Stuckey described at first in a report about the beginning of the project as "hostile," reluctant and unsure. She elaborated:

> The students would not get out of their chairs, for example, to go to the chalk board. They resented open guidelines suggested by the cross-age tutoring program. The students hated additional burdens imposed upon them…. The students changed. By the end of the 1988 semester, the students had organized their…class to incorporate plays, consultants, newsletters, and future plans. They grew to understand their own expertise, and after that they welcomed the opportunity to extend their expertise to others. In this way, the students wound up producing plays and publishing a state-wide newsletter.

Even the youngest tutees, the Branchville first-graders, responded to tutoring with increased motivation. Dorothy Brannum teaches "compensatory first grade" at Branchville Elementary. In a February 1989 interview, she said, "The program is working because they've already gone from one book to another book level. Usually it takes a little longer to get to where we're going. We got there a little earlier by adding the tutors." She noticed that the first-graders sometimes had special incentive to work harder on their reading:

> We had a little student whose jealousy, I think, prompted him to start reading. I thought he couldn't read. His tutor would be all upset because he wouldn't do a thing. Then we got a new first-grade student in. I said, "Well, we don't have an extra sixth-grade tutor so this boy's tutor will have to help you, too." I guess the first boy figured he wasn't going to have a tutor any more, so that day he got his reader out. He did three stories without her telling him a word, and she said, "Stop, stop, give him a chance to read!" And he was just going on and on. Now he usually races to see who can do the most reading.

"Self-esteem": pros and cons

Tamassee-Salem Principal Sam Bass noticed changes in involved students early in the first year of the program. He said then: "I like what's happening with the cross-grade tutoring. I don't know how much 'teaching' is being done by the students, but it's improved their self-concepts, and that helps with everything else." Other adults, including Superintendent Nelson Perry and Principal Joseph Jackson of Branchville, also commented on the changes in students' self-esteem.

But the idea that the program works *primarily* by raising student self-esteem makes Stuckey uneasy, at least as far as that is equated with improved literacy. That equation, she thinks, "passed off as theory, empties education of content and strips persons or groups of autonomy." She is also afraid that equating education with nurture makes the idea of education nebulous and less likely to be funded by schools. Furthermore:

> Ordinarily, when kids do something unusual or remarkable what's assumed to be going on is that they're learning, and that they're broadening their intellectual horizons. But when you're talking about populations of not-so-successful kids, when they do something remarkable people assume that it's their self esteem improving, not that they're learning—and that's an insidious differentiation.

Quantitative results

Although most of the adults involved in working with the program mentioned evident improvement in students' self-esteem as a solid benefit, in truth, schools and administrators generally place more faith in quantifiable test scores than in "soft" qualitative observations about self-esteem and performance. How do students involved in cross-age tutoring perform on standardized, quantifiable, objective tests? Pretty well, it seems, as the scores start to come in. Nineteen of the thirty-six Tamassee-Salem children in the 1987-88 program "tested out" of the remedial reading program (of the remaining seventeen, one was not tested). This passing rate of fifty-four percent reflects remarkable improvement for a one-year program, according to guidance counselor Manuel Burdette.

At the end of a year of tutoring, seven out of eight Branchville compensatory first-graders in the 1987-88 program tested as ready for regular first grade on the Cognitive

Skills Assessment Battery. The child whose "81" was seven points below the cut-off still had come a long way from her beginning score of 64, the lowest in the group.

It may be no coincidence that the Branchville sixth-grade "double hitters," who tutored first-graders and were tutored by high-school students in 1988-89, showed the best overall language-arts improvement on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) of any group in the two years of the program. Based on tests the students took in spring 1988 and retook in spring 1989 after a year of intense peer tutoring, seven out of the eight improved significantly (rising a measurement category) and four improved dramatically (rising two measurement categories).

While a number of the high-school students also measurably improved on CTBS performance—six out of eleven students in one class, and six out of eight in another—it seemed that the younger students in this project showed the most improvement on standardized tests. However, the March 1986 *Harvard Education Letter* article, "Big Kids Teach Little Kids," observed that in another project the older tutors made more measurable progress in reading than their tutees. Superintendent Nelson Perry said that the high-school scores were "probably a significant improvement, because…by tenth and eleventh grades these students usually have academically leveled out, unless something special happens."

Several of the sites in the larger S.C. Rural Writing Network—the state-wide writing improvement project funded by Bread Loaf and headed by Ike Coleman—incorporated elements of cross-age tutoring in their projects. None of the seniors in Gilbert High School teacher Nancy Bickley's remedial class had ever passed the reading section of the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) exit exam. After researching and writing children's books for younger students, and thereby doing a lot of reading and writing aimed at helping younger students, every student passed the writing section and all but one passed the reading section of the BSAP exam. Although they did not participate in the cross-age tutoring project proper, these students—and others—showed that tutoring could work in a variety of settings and within a range of models.

Qualitative results

But there are other less easily quantified, perhaps more important means of assessing student achievement—teacher observation of student involvement and enthusiasm, and student engagement in tasks, for example—that indicate improvement in students.

If there is one thing the South Carolina interactive writing project has demonstrated, it is just how far students can come in ways that standardized tests don't reflect. Here is one more example. The level of student involvement and autonomy increased in the Tamassee-Salem ninth-grade tutors this year until they began to explore their own interests that grew out of reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*—World War II and the Holocaust—and to find out how to find out about them.

Students identified and brought in a local guest speaker who had lived in Nazi Germany, and they read books about the time, focusing on what schools and young people were like. They then wrote a short play about a Nazi school, which they produced and performed for their sixth-grade tutees, and a few guests, with a set of questions to find out how the audience itself would respond to staged situations. None of this was part of their assigned work.

What's more, the students were excited about it and they cared about their final product—responses hard to capture with a graphite pencil mark in an oval box. As one of the authors wrote to site coordinator Ike Coleman:

> I just want to say sorry we did not put on the play, after you went through the trouble of coming all the way to Salem. Rob and Tina and I worked on it pretty hard but we felt like it just wasent good enough and we wanted to make it better. I really hope you understand.

Another co-author and actor wrote:

> We already got posters and our plays written already. Everone here is preparing and working very hard to organize this play we are thinking about putting the play on tape and that sounds like a wonderful idea Mrs A is very excited to about doing the play too.

Equally hard to measure with numbers—and far more moving than a percentile rank—is a note written by a ninth-grade tutor to her sixth-grade tutee, both of whom had been dissatisfied with their reading until they discovered *Little House on the Prairie*. "I think we have finally found a book we like."

Challenges, opportunities

No program is perfect, and as Nelson Perry said, "We're never going to find a panacea and say, 'Aha! We have arrived!' Both the Branchville teachers and 1988-89 project director Kenneth Alston feel that the children should have done more writing: "[We] should work hard to incorporate the writing into the project. The students want to document the project, as well as correspond with the outside adults. Those in charge need to make sure that this writing is an integral part of the project, not just something extra that students do when they have time."

In talks with participants, the word "logistics" came up time and again. Given the sometimes extraordinary scheduling problems involved in matching up diverse groups of students, anyone interested in setting up an interactive writing program in school either ought to work with children fairly close in age or be prepared to do a lot of juggling and negotiating. But it's worth noting that while same-class peer tutoring dispenses with scheduling problems, having older students work with younger offers weaker students a chance to be successful teachers, rather than always being on the receiving end. Site coordinator Ike Coleman commented:

> The scheduling for the project involves overturning a lot of barriers. Fairly obviously, then, everyone has to be convinced that the project will be truly beneficial, as a learning experience for the kids, and in all the other ways that are considerations for the people involved. If I were starting up a project for the first time, I'd begin with a PR blitz, to ease everyone's fears, and show them that the project is worth the effort.
>
> If the scheduling time can't be worked out so students can meet physically, the cross-age component can be embedded in many other kinds of activities, where older students, for instance, write for an audience of younger students—like the children's books at Gilbert High and Morrison Elementary, for instance.

In setting up an interactive writing program, teacher Den Latham emphasized that:

> Student input and involvement is important. They should get to choose what they read and help make other decisions about what they do and how they meet. You need to have plenary sessions, where students and teachers

High-school student Jennifer tutors Florence Brandyburg's sixth-grade students at Branchville.

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stop and discuss what's working and what isn't. You need to break down the power structure of tutor/tutee/adult. Sometimes the older students act like "teachers"—and that changes the nature of the tutoring sessions.

A number of students talked about the benefits of being able to choose what they read or the kinds of projects and approaches they might undertake. A Tamassee-Salem tutor said:

> Allowing the tutees to pick out their own reading materials, something that held their own interest, was real good. Putting on the readers' theater pieces, reading the short stories and stuff, helped—even the magazines and things we read. It was something the tutees wanted to do, and they felt like they were being involved with it then, and they wanted to do more of it.

Teacher Michele Alexander, who participated in the Tamassee-Salem program for the first time this past year, stressed the importance of flexibility:

> Though we planned on pairs working together—one tutor with each tutee—we quickly realized that stable pairs wouldn't be possible because so many students came in and out of the classroom all year. Eventually, we, including the kids, figured out that one tutor with two or three tutees was the best way to go in our situation. If we had been rigid about how we wanted to run the project, it wouldn't have worked. Go slow. Don't expect all of it to fall together at one time.

The future

In this the third year of the project, the South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Project is formally affiliated, with continuing support from Bread Loaf, with the Rockefeller-funded statewide humanities project, REACH. Director Elspeth Stuckey, whose office is now at South Carolina State College, plans to increase the number of sites and to concentrate on expanding cross-age tutoring from the schools out into the communities. She commented:

> A certain number of Bread Loaf projects have done that, especially the ones in the small communities, where their school—even though people might not be tied directly to it—is one of the major activities there. Parents can become aware of what their kids are doing, can see the tutoring work and see their kids sending electronic mail from a terminal.
>
> And then those parents can be taught by these kids to do the same thing, which gives them access to a much wider world of information and opportunity than they currently have. I think you *can* make an entire community aware of possibilities it didn't know about.

Such a specially funded project can hope for long-term survival only if it becomes institutionalized and made a part of the school system. One of the most encouraging signs that this interactive writing project might make it—and a comment that indicates a deep understanding that the project isn't just another quick fix—came from Superintendent Nelson Perry: "If the tutoring program is successful it will become part of the system. And I'll give it time to be successful." ❑

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Roger Raddit and me

by J. Elspeth Stuckey

I am a literacy driver. I drive 50,000 miles in the car every year. I direct the South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Program. The program appears to be simple. It matches older students and younger students. Together the students read, talk, and write. The indispensable aspect to the program is that it asks students to write regularly and often about what they are doing. The theory is that students who reflect on what they are doing, do what they are doing better. In this case, since literacy is the agenda, the literacy of the students should improve.

The program operates in rural school districts in South Carolina. It targets all ages and grade levels of at-risk students. This means that the students are poor and often minority and can be found in remedial, non-college preparatory classes.

The program is attractive. It is very cheap. Its outstanding expense is the cost of stamps though fancy versions of the program require about $50.00 a month in computer network time. At the moment, the chief problem of the program is improvement. After a year of the program, the students tend to pass out (as they put it). They do too well to remain part of cross-age tutoring. The upshot of the failure to continue to fail is that poor kids ask to be returned to remedial classes.

I would like to read to you entries of a journal of Timothy Jones, an at-risk, rural, black seventh grade child. Timothy is not in the cross-age tutoring program, and in fact I am setting up his writing as a foil. The journal is a spiral bound notebook set up to be a journal, with places for titles, dates, entries, and teachers' signatures. It is a school journal. There are only six or seven entries. Most of the pages are blank.

The subjects are assigned. The first subject was "My Wish." Timothy wrote: "I want to be a famous football player. A running back." The second entry was "My favorite person." Timothy wrote about his grandmother. "I love my grandmother. If she died, I do not know what I would do. She used to take me to yard sales. She would buy something for me and something for the house." The third entry was titled, "The worst day of my life." The entry read, "Today is the worst day of my life."

None of these journal entries was over four lines or sentences. One simply read, "Mrs. X, please do not ask me to write about this subject." The most striking feature of the journal, apart from the fact that it clearly went nowhere—or perhaps because of this fact—was the contrast between the brevity of the entries and their humanity. To my mind, this journal is an example of utter waste—a waste to the school system, a waste to the kid, a waste to the world. It was a literacy exercise, a paean to the idea that reading and writing are good for you.

Let me give you a quick contrast of the kind of writing done in cross-age tutoring, another foil because it, too, is usual. The writing was done by two fifth grade at-risk little black boys in schools about 200 miles apart.

> *Part One:*
>
> *The Little Boy Who Ate His Goldfish*
>
> Once upon a time a little boy and his mom had bought a goldfish from the pet shop for ten dollars. And when he got home, he gave it lots of food. Every day when he came to breakfast, he gave it food. One day it got so fat he didn't know what to do. The next day, his mom had to go to work and forgot to fix his breakfast. And the little boy got hungry and ate the goldfish.
>
> *The Sequel:*
>
> When his mom got home, she said, "What happened to the goldfish?" So, the little boy said, "Well, he got out of the fish tank and walked out of the door and got hit by a car." "I do not believe you, tell the truth or I will spink you." "I will tell the truth. Well, I was hungry and ate the goldfish." The next day he bought a gold fish at the same price, and the next day they didn't have any food to eat and they were so hungry they cut the fish in half and ate it.
>
> —finished with a true ending

In cross-age tutoring, older and younger students meet together twice a week for about twenty minutes a shot. An eighth grade class may tutor a fourth grade class which may tutor a first grade class. The students read and write and talk, but mostly they read. They rely on materials in the school library or in the classroom. After a short time, the students learn to request reading material. They fill out "Request Forms," which are little proposals to outline solicited material, estimate the cost, project the outcomes, and so on. White, redneck wrestling magazines are quite popular—among little black boys who wax eloquent on the kinds and severity of fake wrestling holds executed by overweight bleached blond males.

After the tutoring, the older students, and often the younger students, take some hasty field notes in a journal. Some students do this diligently. Others blow it off. At the end of each week, the older students—and often the younger students—write letters to an outside person, usually me,describing the events of the week. The letters are informal but the writers are quite serious. Here is a typical letter:

> Dear Dr. Stuckey:
>
> My name is Ronald Bowman. My tutor is Adrian Walker. The book that we read was Who Framed Roger Raddit. It was a bout Roger [who] was in love with Jessica. Roger say they will get marrit one of theys day but Jessica do not love Roger Raddit. She love a never man and the man that she love hit Roger Raddit in the head. and very very very very hard in the head. he went out and they say Who framed Roger Raddit.

This is from a fourth grader in an Educable Mentally Handicapped class. The tutor, Adrian, is from a high school remedial reading class. (I admire the talent of the educable mentally handicapped to render Roger Raddit into classical theater.)

We are all interested in long term growth. What happens over time with students in cross-age tutoring? One thing that I do in the program is to write letters back to students. These are usually group letters, and while they address general topics, the letters respond specifically to what students have said to me. Sometimes I praise, sometimes I tell students to get off their duffs, sometimes I offer suggestions, sometimes I ask students to re-examine explanations they have proffered for their and others' behavior. The following excerpts are from a series of letters from April Mayers, an eighth grade poor white girl.

> *Letter One, September 1989*
>
> My name is April Mayers. From Branchville High School. I really do like this program. I am working with Lawrence Nolan and Arnold Smith. I really don't like working with those two. They play around a lot…Is their anyway I can change with someone?
>
> *Letter Two.*
>
> Today is October 13. Thanks for the [ink] pens. There great. The tutee's will start next week taking notes… . Today we finish reading our second book. I'm really getting interesting in this tutoring business. That's it for now.
>
> *Letter Three*
>
> I'm glad I received a letter from you. I love writing letters. I would like that statement to go to Stanford University and Clemson University…. Yes, I thought about becoming a teacher. That's in my

mind right now. I think teaching is a very experience.

Letter Four

Now, let me get to the tutoring… Lawrence is doing a lot better. He loves to read and *laugh!* Arnold doesn't want to pay attention. But, that's elementary for you. I think we're going on our fourth or fifth book. This one is going to take awhile. Because they have been getting easy ones. So, I told them to get a harder and longer book. Believe me they did!

Letter Five

Today we talked about camels. How camels can live in the desert and not us. Very interesting!

Letter Six

Well, this Friday I want [won't] be able to tutor. Because I have to go to my family doctor to talk about my heart murmur.... Lawrence and Arnold is doing a lot better! They and I rather for me to read to them. They also understand better. Today when I go [to tutor] I'm going to show (again) how to do the request and response forms. Because I seen they have wrote to you about a request. I'll get back to you about this today.

Letter Seven

Well, today was just perfect. Everything went well. Instead of using the book, we used the tape player. We were able to get through two nice stories. They listen very, very well to the tape player. They also answered questions from the story.

In early December, 1989, April wrote to a class of fifth grade students who had just joined the program. The new students lived in Jasper County, about an hour south of Branchville. No one from Branchville had ever been there. The town's logo is "The Gateway to Hilton Head," which, as far as I can tell, is Hilton Head's attempt to reassure tourists who take the wrong exit from Interstate 95.

> Dear Jasper Students. Do you like this program? I do! This is my first year in it. So it's new for me. I also have great teachers to work with.... Well, we (my tutees and I) have our good days and bad days. First off, I read to them. Then I asked questions. After that they read. Last but not least I ask them some questions about what they read to me. To see if they understand what they read. So it's thrilling! Sometimes it can be hilarious…
>
> What is Jasper County like? Well Branchville is very small! We have an High School. Which I'm in. It's from 8th thru 12 graders. Then Elementary School. Kind. thru 7th grade. We have two grocier stores, three gas stations, two clothing stores, few barber pallers, and one doctor office. It's like you can just walk around Branchville. Every last week in September we have a festival. It's called, "Branchville RayleRoad Daze." Because we are the oldest Railrode in the world. So that is when Branchville livens up!

Just before Christmas, 1989, April wrote to me:

> Hey. Thank you a lot for the movie [Roger Raddit]. It was good.... My tutee is doing good. Both of them. We are finish with just about all the books. We must have had about six of them. I like using E-MAIL. It is fun because I love to work on computers.

After school recessed for vacation, April sent a Christmas card. She signed it, "Tutor, April."

On July 10, 1990, April wrote:

> Hello!
>
> How is your summer. Mine is doing good. I'm really enjoying it. I can't wait to go back to school. But it's one problem. Which I'm sort of glad but sort of not glad [of]. I want to be in Mres. Able's classroom next year [the cross-age tutoring class]. Jennifer [Rita's sister] will be though. But hopefully I'll get to do like Jennifer did [Jennifer is one of the students who bargained her way back in to remediation]. What'cha think. Well I've talked to a lot of our tutees. Also I've been reading books. I know this is a very short letter. But I thought I would be nice and drop you a few lines in.... One more thing. Since I want [won't] be in the program, can we have a meeting so I can still be involved in the cross age tutoring?

At the end of August 1990, April wrote:

> Hello. I haven't heard from you in a long time. I haven't written you either. So I thought I would write you. Is it any way that we can arrange for me to still come and be in the S.C.C.A.T. program. I have art last period instead of Mrs. Able's classroom….

This letter was virtually flawless. There were paragraphs, commas, correct spelling, date and return address, apostrophes, more commas, and—at the other end of the literacy industry—awareness of audience, critical thinking, wheeling and dealing, you know, literacy.

April—and she is representative—seems to be a literacy success story. Her writing argues for the legitimacy of the theory of reflection. April's letters change over time.

This is fine. I do not believe, however, that literacy is the explanation. In all of my experience with rural and poor and marginalized students, I have found that students do not reflect on literacy or "language" very much at all. They are not into paragraphing pieces of writing, juggling sentences from one page to the next, expressing their innermost feelings, or even believing that literacy will shelter them through life, a belief that I do not hold either. In none of my letters to them or theirs to me do we mention literacy, do we ask each other to write longer or shorter or more organized ideas, to fix up our style or grammar, to please use vocabulary suitable to grade level, or to refrain from mentioning subjects irrelevant to school. We do not compare dialects, registers, or school and home talk.

I would argue—I am arguing—that something other than literacy is the reason for April's "literate" development. In fact, I believe that *because poor, linguistically nonstandard students do not need to reflect on language*, their abilities to handle language and situation *battered* by language improve. *Indeed, the need to reflect on language per se is itself a phenomenon of social class.* This is why I think, for example, remedial, "certifiable" non-readers can teach others to be literate. In this respect, a respect so fundamental as to be easily screwed up in many learning situations, and misinterpreted to mean that students do not benefit from literacy—the non-learner is in better shape, and why I believe, also, that poor, remedial, non-standardized students must be recruited to be teachers (which is an argument in favor neither of poverty nor ethnic assimilation).

I am not fond of saying mendacious things, and what I just said said, in respect to current *and* long-term *probabilities*, is mendacious. On the other hand, I do not see much of our current work in literacy as anything different. What I must come to grips with and try to explain is if literacy is not the source of literate development, then what is? The answers are very difficult, and I feel like I am on shaky ground. Let me try to tell you how cross-age tutoring informs what I am thinking.

I think that cross-age tutoring succeeds because it involves working class or impoverished kids. I think that this group of children understands the value of their own lives—not their worthlessness—because they know the meaning of power. They know that language is power only if language is economically ratified (or, as they see it daily, racially esteemed). They know that their own language runs a deficit. They know that they need to be empowered less by language than by modest comfort and access to unfearful, tacit opportunity. It enrages me when poor third grade students are informed of their job possibilities. Students of all ages know very well what is going on when their school assemblies invite either the police or local white male managers of factories who stress the necessity of staying in school and learning how to read.

I do not want to make it sound like these kids are denizens of social theory. Certainly ill-comforted children beat up on each other. When older remedial kids get their hands on younger remedial kids, the initial response is to complain bitterly about lack of attention, lousy spelling, lousy attitude. Once, an older child broke a ruler over the head of a younger child, a practice she borrowed from her teacher. Quickly, however, when older kids are asked why younger kids fail to pay attention or squirm in their seats, and what good it is to sit still, the older kids respond readily—and, if you remember April—hilariously. The point is that these are kids, and kids know it. They are not the work force. In the schools these particular kids have rarely experienced the freedom to be themselves. Given the chance, they are very good at it. That is why, I believe, their literacy improves.

The American communities that have been most blown apart in the last two decades have been those of black Americans. These were communities long dedicated first and foremost to being free and to promoting fairness. Prior to desegregation, black schools, communities, and families existed together. Communities, rather than families, were nuclear, and school teaching relied on community support. Black children, whose perimeter environments have always been violent, learned to read and to write long before white educators told them they could not. In other words, educational success was defined not by literacy but by community. Literacy came along for the ride.

The opposite is true today.

To me, the value of cross-age tutoring is that it creates strong communities of children who need strong communities the most and whose chances of getting them are least. Moreover, it promotes the kinds of strong communities that provide the kinds of communication that promote strong communities.

But, cross-age tutoring is a strategy, not a goal. What we have to ask ourselves is not what kind of literacy we want but what kind of communities.

I think the thing that scares me most is not that literacy educators are least prepared to answer this question but that literacy educators are most prepared. So what do we do? We talk about literacy.

If this means Roger Raddit to the rescue, I am afraid a never man is going to hit us on the head very, very, very, very hard, and we will go out. And then they will say, "Who framed Roger Raddit?"❑

J. Elspeth Stuckey is the Director of The South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring Program and author of the recently published The Violence of Literacy *(Heinemann/Boynton/Cook). "Roger Raddit and Me" was originally delivered at the MLA Rights to Literacy Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 1990.*

Before the Millenium:
A Student Becomes Teacher

Background: Cross-Age Tutoring

Children have taught other children as long as they have been living, playing and learning together, but the idea has caught on more recently in formal education. In the 1790's, Andrew Bell dismissed most of the teachers at a school for troubled boys he directed in India and devised a system for the older boys to become the teachers. Joseph Lancaster transported the idea to England, and a forerunner of what we now call cross-age tutoring gained a foothold for a while there in the early nineteenth century. And, in more recent history, as Dixie Goswami and others have pointed out, the idea that older students can be responsible for the learning of younger students permeated the life of one-room schoolhouses throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

But cross-age tutoring truly blossomed in the 1960's with educators like Peggy and Ronald Lippet, who showed that allowing older troubled students to tutor younger children had the potential to transform the older students and nurture the learning of the younger students. In Children Teach Children, a compassionate and persuasive book written in 1971, Gartner, Kohler and Riessman write about the theory and practice of cross-age tutoring projects, gained from experience with such large and highly acclaimed programs as Mobilization for Youth, Youth Tutoring Youth, and Each One Teach One. Gartner, Kohler and Riessman, like most of the proponents of cross-age tutoring, say the idea benefits both the tutors and the tutees, but especially the tutors, who are placed in a position of trust and responsibility, and who must learn in order to teach. Because of the benefit to the tutors, many cross age programs have employed as tutors students who themselves need extra help. And because many of these students have been told, explicitly and implicitly, that they have nothing of value to give in school, tutoring can be a powerful way for them to see their worth--as well as to learn.

In the 1980's Shirley Brice Heath began a cross-age tutoring project where non-native English speakers in California, at Fair Oaks Elementary, tutored younger non-native English speakers, in English. In Heath's project, (discussed in an upcoming book, Children of Promise: Literate Behaviors in Classrooms of linguistic and Cultural Diversity) the older students not only tutored, they analyzed the linguistic progress of the younger students, kept field notes, corresponded with an outside adult, and wrote a manual for the project. Through Heath, the linguistic enrichment central to the work in California became part of the South Carolina Cross-Age Tutoring project, now directed by Elspeth Stuckey.

In South Carolina

For the past three years at Tamassee-Salem High School, a small isolated school in the foothills of South Carolina, the project has linked older remedial reading students, generally high schoolers from grades nine through twelve, as tutors with younger remedial students, most of whom have been sixth graders.* The older students not only tutored the younger students, they also were responsible for planning the activities, keeping track of the tutoring in a journal, and corresponding with the tutees and with an interested outsider who wrote back to the students. (Last year I was the interested outsider, but I also visited the class regularly--usually once every week or two--and wrote observations of those visits. In addition, because I was based at nearby Clemson University, I helped to find outside resources when the students asked for them.) The younger students also kept journals and wrote letters, and to a greater or lesser extent, they helped the tutors in planning. The role of the teacher, Michele Alexander, was crucial, but it was much more as a facillitator than a director. The project would have died quickly without Ms. Alexander's active support, but that support involved setting aside time for journal writing, for instance, or giving the tutors time to plan activities--within the everyday life of the classroom: one of the reasons for the project's success was that Ms. Alexander was willing to take the risk to make cross-age tutoring central to the work of the students in her course.*

To understand how valuable the project has been, it's necessary to know a bit about remedial education in South Carolina. Here, students who score below a certain level on standardized tests must be "remediated" in some way. These students are almost exclusively poor and too often black (though Tamassee-Salem is an exception--many of the students are poor, but the school is almost 100% white). Frequently--and in the case of the Tamassee-Salem--this remediation takes the form of special classes for students who have done very poorly on the tests (below the 25th percentile, for instance, on the CTBS, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills,* though students in some grades are also placed in remediation on the basis of another test devised by the state). The work for these classes typically involves workbook exercises, computer assisted drill, and multiple choice questions in preparation for the tests. I am no longer surprised in the least when I enter a remedial reading class with no real books whatsoever--only workbooks. In much of the teaching and evaluation in South Carolina public education, the job of teachers is to teach and students to learn the sequenced skills of the curriculum. But particularly in remedial programs, the idea that students might have something to contribute to their own learning and that of other students is utterly out of the realm of consideration.

At Tamassee-Salem the Cross-Age Tutoring project was surrounded by this context, where the curriculum is tightly constrained, and where students are convinced they're failures and question only themselves--not a reading program that allows no reading, and certainly no writing.

I learned a great deal from the project, but I won't, however, try to measure the success of cross age tutoring at Tamassee-Salem by the usual measures used to quantify educational success in South Carolina. I don't know how the students fared on standardized tests, and I don't want to. If I did know, I wouldn't quote them here, even if they were good, because using the data from such tests is a validation of those tests, and I want no part of validating any of the standardized tests presently used to oppress South Carolina teachers and students. More fundamentally, I believe tests utterly miss the most important kinds of learning, and it is that learning, on the part of one student and me, that I want to address.

In conception, the students should become language researchers, charting in their journals evidence of the linguistic progress of their tutees. In reality, at Tamassee-Salem, many of the tutors and the tutees live in a local foster home, and so throughout the project students moved in and out, making stable pairs impossible. In nearly every one of my visits students had left or entered the class, although there were no more than twelve students participating at most. This was more than a logistical problem: in a project that involves the friendship that arises out of collaboration, such changes are traumatic. Nevertheless, as happened throughout the project, students adjusted and devised their own solution, so that instead of pairs, they worked together in small groups of three or four. As a result, the kind of close language research of one student's progress was largely out of reach. Instead, students spent a great deal of their energy planning for activities, writing in their journals about the activities after they happened, and corresponding.

Another of the project's flaws was that it didn't get fully underway until December--not an unusual problem for a project that requires such flexibility in scheduling. Especially in such a small school, it was difficult to arrange the schedule so that two remedial classes of the same subject, with an appropriate age difference, could meet at the same time. And yet, even in little more than half a year, the project made a lasting difference to the students.

During the first year, 1987-88, the project had no content focus--the students helped each other on any kind of reading that they chose. That year, in fact, Elspeth Stuckey, the statewide project director, mentioned the need for some sort of focus. But in 1988-89, the students solved the problem themselves--without prompting--by choosing a theme, after reading a very condensed version of Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. They chose to read the full version of the book, and from the beginning they considered acting out some piece of it--or the entire condensed version.

One Student

Though every student in the project participated fully in the work and liked it--several of them more than anything else they've done in school--I chose to focus on one, Rick Byrd, because he liked it a great deal, worked hard, thought about it in and out of school (and still thinks about it), and because I believe has gained more from it than most of the other students. Plus he writes great letters. And yet in some ways he's not an outstanding example of what the Cross-Age project can do. Rick is not in the least exceptional in his linguistic progress through the program. His educational life has not been turned around by the project. But linguistic progress is not the center of what I want to discuss.

Here is part of one of Rick's early letters:

> 1-2-89
> Dear Ike:
> The tutoring session was a great day. tim [Rick's tutee] was reading [ready] to work as soon as I walked in the roon Tim as [has] really got attached to those books he really like those books. We missed you today in the tutor class. tim as [has] came up with some terrific ideas for the tutor class. Mrs. alexander told us this morning that we can do a play in the Action Magazine it is a wonderful play I was thinking about video tape it. like I told you before. I am glad I am helping the 6th graders out on their reading skill I wish you would came today. because the kids was asking about you this morning... thank you a lot for the brochure [Rick had earlier asked for a brochure about Clemson University]. it was very interesting I was thinking about going on a field trip at

> Clemson University English Department one day before school is out the tutors going & the kids in the tutoring class it is a great idea to do this. did you reseve [receive] my letter...the session today went outstanding Mrs. alexander has a class full of students now so when you come Wednesday you will see the difference. (more kids). do you tutor anyone else besides here at the school this [thanks] for the letter and take care of yourself it was a wonderful day Well I have to go see you Wednesday morning have a nice weekend: and take care of yourself. see you later Thanks for everything
>
> Rick E Byrd

Clearly, at the writing of this letter, Rick would have had real trouble on a standardized test. But just as clearly, the letter shows much of the richness of a project that is not geared toward preparation for standadized tests, especially when considered within the context of the usual fare of workbook exercises, computer-assisted instruction, and other work on isolated skills that often happens in South Carolina's remedial reading classes.

First, Rick obviously loves what he's doing. Perhaps for the first time in his life he has been entrusted with the learning of another student. And he focuses on Tim, observing and noting his behavior ("tim was [ready] to work as soon as I got in the room.") Even more gratifying, he credits and praises Tim for his "terrific ideas," though it's not completely clear what those ideas are--perhaps the play in the Action Magazine. (I found throughout the project that in such a warm and close collaboration it was difficult to trace the origin of ideas to specific people.)

Further, in this letter and in all of his others, Rick is full of ideas and suggestions for the future. That many of those ideas may have come from other students is irrelevant. In this project, students believed their ideas could count, so they had them--and shared them. One of my main tasks became to try to keep up with their ideas and if possible do what was necessary to bring them to reality.

Rick's letters taught me something too. Had I not known Rick, and if my role toward him were different, the mechanics in his correspondence would have put me off--would have terrified me, in fact, had I felt solely responsible for his language learning. But the deep humanity of his writing broke through my English teacher's defenses. Rick helped me feel the truth of something I had come to believe--that the human connection of this kind of communication was infinitely more important than periods and capitals, or even content.

But I didn't have to settle for an either/or choice: From reading and from years of working with Dixie Goswami, I knew that the best way for students to learn language was to be actively engaged in using it for real communication--and Rick was certainly engaged, having written a one and a half page letter, closely following another one just as long. And perhaps because of the safety of the communication, Rick experimented with language. And, though he hasn't mastered the conventions, he has a great deal of linguistic sophistication. He uses subordinate clauses confidently and well; though he doesn't use paragraphs, he generally makes sensible and clear transitions; he can switch tenses correctly--a difficult skill; he asks questions, makes suggestions, hints in order to be polite ("we missed you today in the tutor class"), knows the social conventions of letter writing well enough to end warmly. If I were to make two lists, of all Rick can do with language, in opposition to all he can't do, the first list would be much longer. In short, Rick knows a great deal, even about language, that a standardized test would miss.

But through the communication, he's experimenting even with the conventions. In the opening he uses a semi-colon, probably because he had noticed them in my writing (I use too many of them). Though of course he doesn't use it correctly, he's trying it out, just as children learning to talk experiment with sounds.

I answered all the students letters, as fully and as quickly as possible. The role of the outsider, the person--or people--who read the students' letters and journal entries and send prompt, full answers, is crucial to the project. That person does not have to be a researcher. One year I found a number of people in a nearby home for senior citizens who cherished the chance to write letters to students. But some kind of outsider, in addition to providing an audience for student writing, helps students find the perspective necessary to see the value of their enterprise.

Following is my answer to Rick's letter--with no great insights, but it's a fairly typical reply to the students' letters:

> 1/23
>
> Dear Rick,
>
> I'm sorry I haven't written this in time to get it to you in the mail; I'll just have to give it to you in person.
>
> Your letter is one of the very nicest I've ever gotten. I showed it to both my office mates, who were just as impressed as I was. Then--and I

> hope you don't mind--I sent it over the computer network I'm on. Thank you, thank you, thank you.
>
> I can't tell you how much I appreciate your concern for Tim, and for the Cross-age Tutoring program: the project depends entirely on the concern and motivation of people like you. Keep thinking about how to make it more enjoyable for Tim, and for everyone else in the project--your ideas will truly make a difference.
>
> Take care. I'll see you in a couple of days--or just as you get this letter.
>
> Sincerely,
> Ike

Of course in letters to students I did more than praise--I joked, gave advice when students asked for it, asked for more information--all the things human beings really do in letters.

From early in the project, the students planned to do a play based somehow on Anne Frank. Many of the plans for the play are to be found in Rick's letters--not, again, because Rick thought of everything, though he contributed many ideas. But reading through Rick's letters in preparation for writing this article, I realized that they serve wonderfully as documentation for the project because they contain so many of the ideas that later happened.

As I began to see, the project became more and more the center of the life of the classroom. At the students' request, Ms. Alexander set aside more and more time for the tutors to work in preparation for the tutoring sessions. In addition to planning for the play, the students were reading The Diary, making up crossword puzzles with words from World War II, planning a trip to Clemson to talk to a history professor, and doing their own historical research in the school library, all activities that were in stark contrast to what they would have done in other remedial reading classes--workbooks or computerized skill and drill tests.

Perhaps Rick's letter has already made the point obvious, but I want to mention also that, besides the richness of the student work, they initiated almost all of these activities. Unlike the passivity, or rebellion, so characteristic of students in remedial classes, these kids asked the librarian if she could show them a World War II map of Germany, or offered in letters to use their own money to buy videotapes for use in recording the play they were to write, or asked me to find a professor at Clemson who could tell them more about the history of the time.

Here are two more of Rick's later letters, alluding to some of their activities:

3-8-89

Dear Ike:

hey I thought I would write you to tell you about today's lesson in the tutor class Tim had some very good news that we could [use] for the tutoring class. Everyone missed you today Did you read my last letter I hope so. us tutors is practicing the play now after we come back from spring back [break] we are doing the play March 29, 1989 it will be a very excited day. So be here on this date we had read about 6 pages in the diary of Anne Frank. and also we are planning the [crossword] puzzles of Anne Frank they are excited about all of this. We had a Map where Anne Frank was from and they were very excited. So this play will be fun for the tutoring class. this will be a very good project to do for the tutoring class have a great weekend take care

Sincerely,
Rick Byrd

3-28-89

Dear Ike:

hey it feels like I have'nt seen you in a long time. but here is a few lines. Well our play is getting sumed up we already got posters and our plays written already. We are doing our play April 5th 1989. [The play was delayed several times.] I hope you get to come. Did you here about ben is in the hospital [Ben, one of the tutors, was diagnosed with Leukemia--and at this writing still has it] his family is worried about him everone here hopes he gets better soon something about white blood cells and red blood cells. Did you have a wonderful Easter vacation? I sure did. We had a good time. any way we are working hard and preparing for this play everone is working and getting ready for it everone here is very excited about this. Well what have you been doing lately? everone here said hello from the tutoring class. Everone here is preparing and working very had to organize this play we are thinking about putting the play on tape and that sounds like a wonderful idea Mrs A is very excited to about doing the play too. have a wonderful week

here is Ben's address at the hospital
William Benson Price Room 524
Greenville Memorial Hospital
701 Grove Road Greenville, S.C. 29606

Sincerely,
Rick Byrd

I don't need to point out Rick's joy in the activities. I think improvement in the conventions of language is also plain--there is more end punctuation, capitalization is somewhat better, and the spelling and syntax, though not always right, are at least clear enough to give little problem in understanding. But much more important, I think, is Rick's--and the entire project's--concern for Ben. The tutors began corresponding regularly with him while he was in the hospital, and they were particularly conscientious about keeping him posted on the progress of the tutoring project. I think it's significant that none of Ben's other classes last year kept up with him--though I don't think not maintaining contact is surprising, especially in a school where students must become hardened to the loss of friends who come in and out of the local foster home.*

But I believe the project was the reason the students stayed in contact with Ben--and not just because they read about a girl with the compassionate humanity of Anne Frank. I'm convinced that the friendship of their collaboration allowed them to feel such concern for him. [After shorter and shorter periods of remission, he is back in the hospital, perhaps for the final time.]

As Rick's letters show, the activities of the tutors and tutees, with the guidance of Ms. Alexander, were still focused on Anne Frank and its historical background. The tutors designed crossword puzzles with words from the book, found maps of the area, read history books from the library about Nazi Germany, and most of all planned for and wrote the play. But none of the letters from the tutors discussed the content of the play, because they wanted it to be a surprise, for me and the tutees--even for their teacher--who were to be the main audiences.

Before the play, the tutors--at Rick's urging--also invited in two members of the community, Ramona Edney, a librarian, and William Squires, who served in World War II, to talk about the time. By this time, the students were working so much on their own that I didn't even know about the visit from Ms. Edney and Mr. Squires until I got this letter from Rick:

4-17-89

Dear Ike.

We all missed you last Wednesday everone here said hello. We had a wonderful morning in the tutoring class. We had Mr. Squires and Mrs. Edney come in and talk about Anne Frank and adolf hitler the class was very excited about what was going on they enjoyed having a film and talking about Anne Frank why was she in the attic. I thought it was very excited and everone in the class was anxious about seeing the film. They loved it Ever one was very anxious to see you I wished you could have been here. Are we still going to Clemson? I hope so we are just about to do our play. Do you [know] that my sister had her baby last week she had a little girl named Annie. I thought I would share that with you Tim Loved last week's lesson. everone had enjoy it but I wished you were here to see it I hope I get to see you this Wednesday. The tutors are very happy of doing a play for the 6th & 7th graders have you ever meet Mr. Squires he is a outstanding person well I have to go hope to see you Wednesday

Sincerely.
Rick E. Byrd

I see now that this letter was not only as warm and informative as the earlier letters. but there was a great deal of improvement mechanically and syntactically--a comma instead of a semicolon in the opening. a much improved sense of what a sentence is (though he still has a long way to go). and better capitalization. I also notice that he was experimenting with underlining as in a title. though again he hadn't figured the problem out yet. And in this letter. for the first time. Rick had taken time to edit. changing the letter in a number of places visible on the original.

But I must admit that last year when I received the letter. I enjoyed it so much I didn't notice the grammatical points--much as I listen more to what my four-year-old son says than how he says it. trusting that he can learn language without a lot of help from me except as an audience interested in what he has to say.

Here was my answer:

Rick.

What a wonderful letter! ... I'm really sorry also that I missed seeing Ms. Edney and Mr. Squires. Thank you so much for arranging such a fantastic experience for all the students. What did Ms. Edney and Mr. Squires know about Germany? Had they been there during World War II? Was the movie good?

So you're an uncle! Well, congratulations! I didn't become an uncle til I was well into my thirties. Young children are one of the richest things in life, I think. Make sure you spend lots of time with the little girl if you can. And don't forget one of the lessons of the project. You can be a tutor for her also. Children LOVE to be read to.

Yes, I still want to go on the trip to Clemson. I'll make sure to arrange for a van on April 28th, and I'll come to Tamassee-Salem and pick you up. We all need to be thinking immediately about what we want to do when we're here. I'll talk to one or two of the professors about meeting you and telling you about the university, but you and the other students should also think about what kinds of things you might want to do here. I will also try to arrange for a history professor to tell you and answer your questions about World War II and Nazi Germany. I'll get back to you soon with more specific plans...

Sincerely,
Ike

Soon after the visit from Ms. Edney and Mr. Squires, the students wrote to me that the play was ready and asked me to videotape it. The tutors, down to three by this time because Ben was in the hospital and another student had moved, had each written the draft of a short dramatic piece, and then they had combined their ideas for a whole play, accompanied by construction paper programs they had painstakingly cut out and written. During their historical research, the tutors had found information about German education at the time, and they wrote about a classroom scene in Nazi Germany, where a student refuses to salute Hitler the required ten times and is sent to a concentration camp.

The tutors, as Rick's letter shows, were ecstatic about the chance for performing for their tutees--a much different kind of activity from the tutoring sessions. Though the play was very short, and the students, without any coaching in drama, had not understood the need for characters to have motivations, they masterfully incorporated what they had learned into the plot. For example, they read that even math problems to be done by students referred maliciously to Jews. From this knowledge, the students composed the following problem: "A bus holds fifty people. There are ten superior officers, ten common Poles, and five Jewish pigs. How many seats are left?"

In May, a week or so after the play, as an end of the year reward, we all, tutors, tutees, and I, took the trip to Clemson University, doing all the things the students asked--touring the campus, eating ice cream made by the agriculture department, climbing the stadium. For students in a place as isolated as Salem, South Carolina, the trip was a marvel. (One sixth grade student asked me if the university had a principal. "No," I said, "but it does have a president."

"Does he paddle kids?" asked the student.)

And we also visited the one of the history professors, to talk once more about Nazi Germany. I learned here too--not about history. Instead, after a lecture filled with horror stories, backed up by pictures of the most horrifying scenes from death camps, I began to see the possible problems of letting students guide their own discoveries--a new issue for me: all the effects I'd seen until now were positive. As I watched one of the young tutees sitting across a I saw a look of fear cross her face, a look that later settled into sullen anger at the brutalities. I wondered, and still wonder, if I would allow students to explore such atrocities again. I've come to think I would strongly suggest another topic, especially for young students. But again, the spirit of friendly collaboration tempered the horror, and I think we had all forgotten about the lecture as we joked with each other on the way back to Tamassee-Salem.

One Year Later

A couple of weeks ago, I visited Tamassee-Salem once more to interview Rick. I hoped for a great deal. I wanted, and half expected, to learn about his turnaround in school. I've seen the project do that for students. I thought perhaps his teachers might tell me what progress he'd made since last year. I wanted to see samples of his writing that would show continuing progress, and I hoped he would be reading voraciously now, as many of the tutors and tutees reported after a year with the project. Finally, I wanted Rick to tell me about his transformation eloquently and articulately.

I was disappointed in all those expectations. Rick was doing fairly well in school, though not marvelously. One of his teachers was surprised I was doing a case study on him, and wondered if I could get any information from him in an interview. In fact, I didn't get nearly as much as I'd hoped. His answers were usually a few words. What did he do on a typical day in his regular reading class--not the project--I asked him. "Just sit and read." he said. Other questions got similar answers: "I don't know." "I guess so." "I don't remember." But his longest answer was about a typical day in the Cross-Age project:

> We go and get what we need for the class--get some interesting stuff about what they like to do. Then you ask them what type of stuff they want to do in the tutoring class. They say. "Well, just go and get us some fun books to read," and we do that, because we know they like it. We read to them. and the next Tuesday we ask them questions about it. and then after we make questions, we make some crossword puzzles.

I also wanted to see some samples of his writing this year, expecting to find progress. He didn't have any. he told me. Instead he pulled out a new-looking envelope I had used to send him a videotape of the play last year. In it, he had saved for a year a stack of documents from the project of the previous year--a leftover program from the play. xeroxes of some of the historical information, and all the letters I had sent. carefully folded. As he showed them to me, and I realized he didn't have any of his writing from this year, but had saved everything from the project. I came to understand what I've insisted on here--how valuable the project had been. a value aside from. and in addition to. linguistic or academic progress.

But the meeting gave me more than sadness or nostalgia. Even with very little funding this year, the project has continued. though more sporadically, and Rick was even more excited about the present activities than he was about last year's. He and the other tutors, at their own insistence, wrote another play, a Christmas play this time, a copy of which Rick promises to send me.

When the millenium comes, the system of education in this state and others will make concrete the realization that all students can learn and care when allowed some direction over their own learning, and the chance to contribute to the learning of others. Then there will be no need for such a project. But in the meantime, the Cross-Age Tutoring project can be an island of sanity in the midst of oppression, providing a context where roles are fluid enough to make room for all to be teachers and learners--and to show their caring for each other.

* Cross-Age Tutoring at Tamassee-Salem has been funded and supported by the Bingham Trust for Charity, the Bread Loaf School of English, and the Clemson University Department of English.

* Although in this article I've said some harsh things about South Carolina schools, I must add that the project would never have flourished in the state's present climate of fear and accountability if it were not for the fact that Tamassee-Salem is a truly exemplary school, with a warm atmosphere and a creative and dedicated staff, particularly Sam Bass, the principal when the project described took place, who has since moved to another school; Joan Tunstall, the librarian and nurturer, of students and of the project; and Michele Alexander, a dedicated teacher who was willing to risk trying something new. In addition, and most of all, I would like to mention Den Latham a former English teacher at Tamassee-Salem and coordinator of the Cross Age Tutoring project there in 1987-88. Den is one of the most innovative teachers I've ever met, and the success of the CAT project in 88-89 is directly attributable to Den's work.

* Though below the 25th percentile on the CTBS sounds abysmally low, from my own experience with the test, and after talking to dozens and dozens of teachers, I firmly believe that in the low ranges, CTBS scores are meaningless. The test is not only difficult, but there is little, if any, progression of difficulty. The students are defeated from the first, and many make no effort after the beginning. Others try their best, but because there is little progression of difficulty, they simply can't do any of it.

* In the following year, 1989-90, as Ben's cancer worsened, the senior class began to rally for him. They organized fund drives, sent letters to him, and cheered him wildly as he graduated from high school in June. However, in the year I write about, none of his subject area classes, nor his high school class as a whole showed the concern that the handful of tutors and tutees did for him.

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Teaching students and interactive writing projects

by Dixie Goswami

For the past three years, the Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program has supported several projects that prepare students to teach and assist other students and to write about the language development and learning that they observe. In South Carolina, Elspeth Stuckey (Fulbright Scholar in Liberia this year) and Ken Alston (Head of Physical Sciences, Benedict College), working closely with Shirley Brice Heath of Stanford and Bread Loaf, Ike Coleman, Den Latham, and many other helpers, have directed the Cross-Age Tutoring Project, which emphasizes interactive learning and writing for students at all levels, from first grade through college.

The project has matched up classes of older tutors with younger children to work on reading, writing, science and math together. The tutors and tutees describe and analyze their sessions together, with both groups writing to each other and to "outside" adults about what and how they are learning and how they might learn better. One important goal is to improve children's writing abilities.

The interactive projects that I'm describing go beyond peer tutoring or cross-age tutoring by giving children and young adults a chance to describe and reflect (in writing) on language and learning. I understand the roots of the project more easily when I think of what the best of the one-room schoolhouses must have been like, with pupils helping each other as a matter of course and describing progress—or lack of it—to the teacher.

Elspeth and Ken and their co-workers are trying to find ways to establish these currently unorthodox activities inexpensively in rural schools in the midst of, and without disrupting, more traditional methods and approaches. This task seems very important in schools and classrooms where much of the classwork focuses on preparing children to perform successfully on basic skills tests. There's good evidence to show that children who teach and who become language researchers (even those who have not done well in school) also become effective writers who can handle fairly complex rhetorical tasks. And they do well on skills tests.

Many teachers and researchers who have studied and worked with Nancy Martin and James Britton have understood for a very long time that "The word for teaching is learning," and the enterprise is much indebted to their work as well as to Shirley Brice Heath's and Amanda Branscombe's. A powerful theoretical argument for the pedagogy of the interactive writing projects is to be found in L. Vygotsky's *Mind in Society*, especially in his discussion of the role of the "zone of proximal development" in human development.

In a paper presented at this year's Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Elspeth Stuckey and Shirley Heath talk about the new kind of cooperative or shared ownership of learning that projects like the one in South Carolina make possible in the context of school:

> Research on learning and teaching has in the past five years turned increasingly to the study of "natural" learning—that which takes place without the specific designations of teacher and student and outside the framework of a curriculum established by parties beyond both student and teacher. Some recent research in cognitive science and language education has supported the notion that reasoning, problem-solving, arguing for a plan, and creating coherent narratives "come naturally" within many everyday activities. The work reported here was the beginning of a much larger effort now underway across an entire state. The *real* evidence that the students were able to produce of their learning to work and plan together helped convince administrators to support the program in a variety of alternative ways. Aides, who double as bus drivers, take the responsibility for talking with the tutors each week about what they are doing with their tutees. The tutors plan together in "staff development" sessions in which they jointly assess their own and their tutees' changes. Ownership here is shared—between two learners of different ages, and across learners acting as teachers. We propose this mini-model is that which research from a variety of fields now supports for students and teachers of more customary alignments. The casting of self in events—the planning ahead with an entire cast of learners in community—can provide a high-return alternative to the current isolation of ownership for individual students and lonely teachers—all too often cut off from learning with their colleagues.

There are certainly some basic principles and practices that all the interactive writing projects share, but it's clear that each situation has its own constraints and challenges: Each project is custom-designed for the community it serves. For the next two years we'll be trying to incorporate interactive writing projects that involve peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring into all of our funded projects, in one way or another. The Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program has set aside $3,000 for Bread Loaf teachers who want to start interactive writing projects in their schools. The grants will probably average about $200, with $1,500 being awarded in 1989-90 and in 1990-91.

If you are a teacher who wishes to begin an interactive writing project that involves students functioning as teachers and researchers, here are some suggestions you might wish to consider:

1. Do some reading on your own or with a teacher, parent, or other ally who might be willing to work with you. You'll want to be able to answer in your own words with your own understanding these questions: What is interactive writing? What is cross-age tutoring? What's in it for my child?

The Spring 1988 issue of this magazine featured two articles on the South Carolina project: "Coming of age: The cross-age tutoring project," and "Then we came up with more questions: Students and classroom research." Shirley Brice Heath and Diane Hoffman prepared a guide to their model project in a bilingual California community, "Inside Learners: Guidebook on Interactive Reading and Writing in Elementary Classrooms." The guide has a good bibliography on interactive learning in the classroom, including the following:

Cooperative Learning, Slavin (N.Y.: Longman);

"Cooperative Learning and Sociocultural Factors in Schooling," in *Kagan,Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling Language Minority Students* (California State University at Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center);

Inside Learners: Participants as Observers, Heath, et al. (N.Y.: Teachers College Press);

"'Intelligent Writing' in an Audience Community: Teacher, Students, and Researcher," Heath and Branscombe, in Freedman, *The Acquisition of Written Language: Response and Revision* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex).

Also see Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*; Heath, *Ways with Words*; and Lightfoot and Martin, *The Word for Teaching Is Learning*. The Fall 1989 issue of this magazine will feature an in-depth look at the cross-age program in South Carolina, with further suggestions for how such a program might work for you.

2. Write to *Bread Loaf and the Schools*. Ask questions. If you'd like to be put on a mailing list for any working papers that Elspeth and her co-workers might produce, let *BLATS* know.

3. Draw up a *modest* plan for a year's start-up activities. Choose a single group of children and figure out exactly who'll be doing what, when, how, and why.

4. Visit your principal. You'll probably need several conferences to explain to her and to anyone else who should know what you plan to do. Ask your principal if there are any funds available from any source to help with the project. You could use $5,000, but $200 would be good. (Look for support from local business partners, basic-education funds, and individuals.)

If you have a budget of $200 or under and a good plan, send it to Dixie Goswami, English Department, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634.

5. Find a teacher who will let your students work with her students. Talk at length about problems and payoffs. If going outside your classroom won't work for you, figure out a way to have students (and not just the A-team) become teachers and researchers. Try hard to get outside your own four walls, though.

6. Review your start-up plan. What kind of human help (other than your principal and a cooperative teacher) do you need to survive and succeed? Think about where to recruit helpers. It's not necessary to involve college or university people, but if you can find the right person(s), sign them up. Higher education institutions have more money, time, and resources than schools. What about your community? Is there a church group or a group of retirees who might supply a couple of volunteers who would sign up for a full school year? Be creative. You don't need Ph.D.'s in linguistics for this job (don't turn them down if they volunteer). Someone who shares your beliefs about teaching and learning and who likes working closely with children is the person you're after. No teaching experience or higher education necessary.

7. Sit down with your team and review and revise your plans.

8. Write an easy-to-read, honest letter to the families of children who'll be participating. Explain what you're doing and why and ask them to help. Think of several specific tasks for them. Tell them that they're invited to a special meeting to talk about cross-age tutoring early in the term. Invite them to talk to their children about the project and to talk to you about what they observe, their impressions, their concerns.

9. Give each child a copy of the letter to parents before you send it out. Have them read and edit and add their own individual notes. Students should be full partners in your project. This means they need to know what's going on and why, and they need to have a chance to make decisions and defend them. They need to evaluate the project—regularly. The entire process involves "critical thinking," which in this case invites children to look critically at their own education and to reflect on and talk and write about what's happening.

10. Dive in. Most of us have learned the hard way that it takes a long time to make even what seem to be easy, simple changes in what goes on in our classrooms. Give yourself lots of time—don't judge the success of interactive writing for two or three years. Give yourself lots of treats, such as setting aside time to talk to your co-workers (including your students) about what's happening.

11. Keep a log. Or a journal. Or a diary. Ask your co-workers (kids, too) to write in it or to keep their own.

12. Write to us. Help us form a network of people of all persuasions who are creating contexts for interactive teaching, learning, and writing.

We want *Bread Loaf and the Schools* to be a clearinghouse for information about interactive writing projects. We urge people who are already doing anything like cross-age tutoring to write to *Bread Loaf and the Schools*. If some of your students function as teachers in a fairly systematic way, please write to us, or ask your students to write about the experience.

If you're interested in building interactive learning into your classroom or school and have questions, write to the magazine and we'll produce a question-and-answer column in upcoming issues. If any of your students has written about what it's like to be a teacher or a tutee, please send it along. We also ask anyone to write to us with ideas, or experience in, how to work with community organizations and families to set up interactive reading and writing projects outside of school . ❑

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Cross-Age Tutoring:
The Right to Literacy

J. Elspeth Stuckey and Kenneth Alston

In 1987–88 the Bread Loaf School of English funded a project in South Carolina to improve the literacy conditions of rural students. The project was based on a model called cross-age tutoring that was developed by Shirley Brice Heath to encourage the acquisition of second-language literate behaviors in young Hispanic children (see Hoffman and Heath). The South Carolina project expanded and elaborated the model to involve a broad spectrum of ages, groups, and disciplines.

We offer this essay for more reasons than description. We think that the project works because it is imbedded in theory and politics. The theory concerns the articulation of educational purpose; the politics is the calculated practice of that purpose. The two are really not separable, but we begin with politics.

According to our view, most public education in the United States reproduces the status quo. In so doing, it systematically and successfully restricts the opportunities and aspirations of minorities and the poor. No educator can walk the halls of a public school and not discern a visible class structure. Remediation is a condition of the underclass. Further, standardized testing, teacher education, and exit criteria ensure the failure and the disfranchisement of those who are racially identified and poor. Because literacy in the late twentieth century is the chief instrument of this domination, literacy in the schools is the chief location of struggle.

To instantiate the politics, the project works with rural, poor, and black students. The common term for these students is *at risk*. We assumed from the outset that at-risk students are capable of acquiring abilities, the supposed lack of which identifies them as at risk. As we have come to understand and as others before us have understood, the students at the bottom of the bin are competent human beings who have interests, talents, and the desire to learn. They are simply poor.

The only value of politics is to invent ways to implement change. The cast we would like to give to politics is impatience. We suggest that politics can succeed in the face of daily sadness, wastefulness, and poverty. We believe that the direness of conservative praxis (if there is such a thing) can be replaced by human and economic concerns. The South Carolina project is most useful in this respect because it suggests how a particular approach to literacy yields ends that in school today are ordinarily denied by literacy.

The project intertwines speaking, reading, and writing. Twice a week a set of tutors meets with a set of tutees. The tutors are older than the tutees, but not much; some tutors are only a few years older than their tutees, and some high school students tutor students in elementary school. The tutoring sessions usually last for approximately twenty minutes; some last longer. The older students read and write with the younger students. They concentrate on whole texts, reading entire books or writing complete stories. At the end of each session, the tutors spend ten or fifteen minutes recording field notes in journals. At the end of each week, the tutors write letters to an adviser to describe the activities of the week. The adviser writes letters back to the student tutors with appropriate responses and inquiries. At some sites the participants have access to computers to record notes and to write letters. No matter what technological capability is available, the participants at all sites maintain regular tutorial sessions, keep records, and correspond with advisers.

How South Carolina elaborates the mechanism is a wonderful thing to see. In 1987–88 there were five sites. They spanned the state. One was in the low country, one was in the high country, one was on the North Carolina border, and two were in the midlands. Two of the sites involved junior and senior high school students who tutored elementary school students. One site involved college students tutoring ninth-graders. One involved a college tutor, a college teacher, and elementary school tutees. One involved six fourth-grade tutors and six first-grade tutees.

Site A. The per capita income at site A is under the poverty line. The tutors were sixth- and seventh-graders; the tutees were compensatory first-graders. Compensatory first-graders are very small children. They appear swallowed by the desks they sit at most of the day. They suffer various injuries and often come to school patched up. They have gained entry into the compensatory first grade because they cannot pass skills tests in the first grade. In the compensatory first grade the students must work on those skills to bring them up to standard. Theoretically, the time spent in compensatory first grade is limited, and students are transferred back to the original class. Unfortunately, most of the compensatory first-graders stay in the compensatory first grade. The next year, they enter the standard first grade. During the project, there were three successive compensatory teachers.

The tutors ranged in age from twelve to fifteen. One had lived in more foster homes than her age. One tutor was suspended from the project for allegedly breaking a yardstick over a first-grader. The student was simply repeating an educational tactic practiced on her. Most of the students in the project were black; all were poor.

Site B. The tutees were first-graders, the tutors were fourth-graders. Most of those in both groups were black; all were poor. The black children's ancestors were slaves on the rice-growing plantations in the area before the Civil War.

In the last ten years the area has been bought up by developers and gentrified by retirees and middle managers, whose children and grandchildren have flooded the local school.

Site C. The tutees were sixth-graders, and the tutors were from the ninth through the twelfth grades. Some of the tutors lived in a home for abused and difficult children. This school differed from the others in only one respect: when we were there, the entire school was white. Few blacks live in this industrially desolate part of the state, nor have they ever lived there. The unmistakable revelation is the consistency of economic misery for whites and blacks in poor, rural settings.

Site D. The tutees were three small boys, all black, impoverished brothers and cousins who were despaired of. The youngest was in the first grade for the second time; the next was in the third grade but had failed the first grade; the oldest was in the sixth grade for the second time. The sixth-grader, mid-way through the project, was discovered to be congenitally blind in his right eye. The tutor was a college student, the first black male teacher encountered by any of the children.

Site E. Sophomore-level college students from a historically black college tutored ninth-grade students at a nearby black high school. The average income level of the college families is under $8,000 a year. The average verbal Scholastic Aptitude Test score of the entering freshmen is 282. Of the twelve ninth-grade tutees, six dropped out: one to get a job, one because of pregnancy, one because of home problems, one because of illness, and two after repetitive absences from school.

In all, approximately ninety students were involved in the project.

The background stories of the students are necessary not to belabor the usual pieties of failure and social damnation of poor students but to decry their inimitableness. The mean circumstances the students found at home were endemic in their school lives as well. All these small, medium-sized, or maturing children were systematically informed of their inadequacy and inferiority. They were not the ones with privilege; they were the ones at risk.

Neither the parents nor the teachers of these students were mean, inadequate, or inferior. The teachers and the parents have no personal investment in the damnation of their children. Yet—and we say this with trepidation and conviction—teachers and parents are co-opted by a system that they wish they could change or wish they could beat but are convinced that they cannot. (Of course, we would be dishonest not to admit that some teachers believe in the system and do their best to keep it running.) Good teachers and parents are plentiful; so are rules and regulations to shut them down.

That these students and their teachers were the ones to ratify the cross-age theory is the theory. In this respect there is one other unique aspect of the project.

The project is a literacy project. As such, its usual institutional framework is English—sometimes linguistics, sometimes English education. Consequently the students and the teachers usually come from remedial English classes. The only reason for this association is tradition; the argument against it is the necessity for literacy across the curriculum, the necessity for all teachers to be teachers of reading and writing. To this end, one of the sites set up shop in a science laboratory. This was Site E, the site that involved sophomore college tutors and ninth-grade tutees. The content of the project consisted of the chemistry experiments to be done as part of the tutors' normal course work. Once a week, the tutees traveled to the college to participate in the three-hour lab. Their role began as observers and notetakers. Increasingly, they took part in the experiments until they ultimately began conducting the experiments themselves, using the tutors as references, rather than guides. When the college year ended, the high school students continued to conduct experiments in their own classroom, ultimately becoming tutors to younger tutees from another site.

The literate exchange—the benchmark of the project—evolved around the needs of experimentation. The students had to read and understand complicated laboratory instructions. They had to keep field notes on the progress of the experiment, and they had to write up lab reports at the end. Finally, they corresponded with the adviser, as well as with each other, on the week's experiment, explaining both the science and the scene. This site also incorporated electronic mail during the second semester; the students inputted their correspondence, which was downloaded by the recipients and responded to in a similar fashion. The speed of the correspondence increased remarkably. By the end of the project, several ninth-graders, as well as the sophomore tutors, were accomplished at both chemistry and computers. Clearly, the concept of cross-age tutoring is not restricted to a single discipline.

The question is, what is the concept? To say that the theory of cross-age tutoring is its at-risk population is less to explain than to justify, a justification around whose edges, for better or worse, doubt always hovers. Does grouping older and younger at-risk students in congenial settings of reading and writing simply produce improved literacy? Are we somehow confusing literacy with compassion, counseling, or common sense? The questions would not be so problematic were not the tacit maintenance of such confusion necessary to underpin the current educational system. (Doubt arises most charmingly in situations of oppression.) The concept of the project must be described in two ways: first, as distinct from an ideological, psychological principle and, second, as antithethical to the usual theories of literacy. The first way may imply a critique of the psychopathology of Western education, especially the ubiquitous notion of self-esteem. The second way simply explains how the project understands literacy.

Whereas the project is compassionate and values self-esteem (how artless to have to say so), the notions of compassion or personal attention and self-esteem serve to excuse schools for isolating poor and minority populations of marginally literate students. The project was praised often. The praise usually came in one repeated line: "The students have more self-esteem now." The second most repeated line was "Personal attention is all these students need." The third line began, "The home lives of these students . . . ," presuming no personal attention or self-esteem there either. To be sure, many of these presumptions strike a chord. Yet what was usually taken for a rise in self-esteem was simply the recognition by the students and the teachers of the reality of the students' lives as people, not as blighted parts of the social landscape. The equation of learning with individual attention to self-esteem is wrong; passed off as theory, the equation empties education of content and reduces the stature of some persons and groups. (There is no telling how many middle-class students fail the self-esteem test and receive slight personal attention but somehow avoid remedial reading classes.) The practical results are that schools abnegate the responsibility to change because they claim they cannot fund nurture.

The point is that, as long as an image of smiling faces occupies the vision of educators, the issues of race and class and literacy will remain unaddressed. It is almost malign to observe the educational accomplishments of at-risk students and then to attribute those accomplishments to a rise in self-esteem. It is dishonest to attribute lack of self-esteem to lack of attention or to poor performance on standardized measures of learning. To do so is to miss the import of endeavors like cross-age tutoring. This is more than a bone to pick with school administrators or teachers, for their concern for the quality of the lives of students is genuine. This issue runs to the heart of the remedial mentality and its relegation of illiteracy to the realms of psychic woe. The cross-age project succeeds precisely because it refuses to equate literacy with virtue. The project in no way fools itself into thinking that it, not the institution, sets the conditions for literacy, including the conditions for the project. Many schools politely refuse the offer. Any school can shut down volunteerism at any point. What the project believes about literacy can be said economically.

Literacy is a technology unlike any other. Not a means to an end, literacy is a means to other means. Because the invention of means is the meaning of learning—when conditions are even slightly conducive to fair education—literacy is the most valuable technology. The stronger version of the claim that literacy can promote conducive conditions is tantalizing, but the more likely explanation is that the effects of literacy on programmatic change are the effects of human change. The human condition reveals more about literacy than literacy reveals about the human condition (a conclusion not simple but often not simpatico with the wishes of the literati.) Yet to say so is less to undermine the power of literacy than to translate it, translation itself being a means to other means. This is literacy's unique strength. It explains how the cross-age model of literacy is both portable and local. The model works not because it reveals the symbiotic relation between literacy and class but because it reveals the artificiality of the relation. The concrete, everyday classroom efficacy of the model is that it reveals the difference between students having something to say and their having a place to say it. The first thing the project affords is a place.

At-risk students are rarely asked to do what their more privileged peers routinely do. That is, they are rarely asked to speak, to think, to plan, to collaborate, or to evaluate. A typical cross-age tutoring session asks the tutors to do all those things; literacy is the agency. The tutor meets with the tutees. Together, they decide on a book to read or a composition or story to write, and they sort through the available selections. They sit down together. The tutor begins to read out loud, modulating voice and adjusting the book to the vision of the tutees. When a tutee's attention wanders, the tutor calls it back and asks open-ended questions, a skill learned in training sessions. The tutor may stumble over words but keeps going. The tutor points to pictures to solicit responses, tells stories, listens to stories that the tutees tell. If the task is writing, the tutor and the tutees may discuss their efforts and may read aloud what each has written or what the tutor has transcribed for the tutees. At the end of the session, the tutor records the activity in a notebook and takes time to reflect and recall. After several sessions, the tutor writes a research report, a letter to the adviser to describe the tutoring sessions. In response to the letter, the tutor receives requests for clarification, offers of advice, praise, and references to future activity. The cycle repeats, and growth in observation, analysis, and linguistic maturity manifests as artifacts of literacy. A usual pattern is for the student tutors to progress from hesitant banality to making plans to making requests. A student may write in early field notes and letters, "I am having fun." Soon, the tutor writes: "My tutee needs a magic marker and paper. We are writing a story." Then the tutor asserts: "Send me a computer. I will give you my allowance every week. I can do much more with a computer." With older age groups, the activities merely vary with interest and peer possibilities; the effects and the evidence remain consistent. The revelation of out-loud reading to someone whose interest is interpretation, not correctness, is striking across all ages.

Perhaps for the first time, the tutors encounter occasions essentially of their own making. They learn how to plan ahead and how to understand progress, failure, frustration, and epiphany. The ideas of goals and needs evolve, and the tutors learn, first, to voice their observations and then to trust them. That these things are not solicited in the usual remedial environment hardly needs to be pointed out; that these things are solicited in cross-age tutoring as normal activities cannot be overemphasized. To be sure, the project does not pretend that some students do not have great gaps in their learning or that progress will move at an even pace. Nonetheless, students who can behave as readers and writers, who can be admired for occupying such roles, and who can take risks without fear of penalty are students who can become literate.

In ordinary lives these things sound ordinary. They are characteristic habits of the owners of literacy. They are not characteristic habits of the at-risk. Clearly enough, silenced people have words. Therefore, the one question that remains is the one that literacy cannot answer: What is the value of all this?

What is the value? No school principal, teacher, or superintendent fails to ask that question, and no one has any question about the meaning of value. Does the project improve standardized test scores? If so, proceed. If not, our hands are tied. Are principals, teachers, and superintendents aware of a notion of education apart from tests? Most are aware. It really does not matter. We rarely dealt with teachers, principals, superintendents, state department officials, or even consultants who did not feel that they were on the line concerning test scores. A third-grade teacher describes a typical situation. Every year, standardized-test scores for districts are published in the newspaper. The teachers are not identified. However, some districts have only one class at a particular grade level. Anonymity is hardly preserved for anyone.

Cross-age tutoring is statistically significant. In the first year of the project, the at-risk students improved on a state-mandated standardized test more than any other group in the school. In the second year, the students in the project tested out of remedial reading classes altogether. The college students, in stark contrast to the usual results, took and passed the state-mandated teachers' exam; the students went on to scholarship programs in their fields. The youngest students who had previously failed a grade were passed into the next grade. The data, still being analyzed, are positive.

Statistical significance is not, however, the answer to the question of value. As peremptory as it may sound, if the value of cross-age tutoring is to catch a few students as they fall, cross-age tutoring is worthless, though not callous; it is another epiphenomenon of standardized testing; it simply prolongs the misery of students indelibly incriminated by test scores. The value of the cross-age model is its ability to produce nonstandardizable results, to produce the conditions and the occasions for thought and action to ratify, rather than restrain, student learning. This the project can do. A thick description of any site suffices. A close look at the science project in site E is exemplary.

Chemistry laboratories are not congenial to underprepared students; laboratory manuals are incomprehensible. Sophomores in college are only slightly more equipped to negotiate them than are ninth-grade students. Negotiation is the form that experimentation takes. From some experience the older students tend to know the arcane terminology; they explain it. The younger students tend to gather materials and learn the terminology. When experience is insufficient and comprehension fails, the tutors and the tutees find solutions in the teacher. When groups of students become stymied, the teacher calls everyone's attention to the meaning of a direction in the manual.

Experiments proceed in steps. Each step shuttles between text and laboratory. Again and again, students read a direction; again and again, they measure, heat, pour, observe, calculate, and reach the next step. Reading brings results. Mistakes mean starting over. Knowing the experiment involves keeping notes of the progress made. Experiments succeed, experiments fail, and figuring out why is what matters.

The students explain the experiments in letters to the adviser. The adviser is an English teacher, not a scientist. The adviser is often confused. The lab reports make no sense. The reports have little in common with what happens in the lab. In the lab the students yell at each other, break beakers, leak water on the floor. In the reports, beakers fill themselves, no water spills, experiments resolve. What is going on, this contrast between reality and report? Explain an acid, explain a base. Explain the difference between talk and a report in science.

What is teaching, what is learning? The scientific experiment is an example of the negotiation between the two—an example of the continuum of learning and teaching—which is an example of an authentic practice of literacy as well. The science professor writes the English adviser: "You missed the point in the last write-up. The students were right." The English adviser responds, "Okay, so what am I to do, pretend I understand?" The science professor writes, "Come to the next lab."

The ninth-grade students in the project—the ones who are able to stick with it—learn to learn. They complete an experiment, arrive at an answer. The college sophomores—the ones who are able to stick with it—learn to teach, which is to learn. One kind of evidence is almost humorous. The college tutors complain rancorously of the inattention of their charges. If only the tutees were motivated, if only the tutees listened to the tutors, then all would be well. When the tutees become tutors, the tutors complain rancorously: Tutees don't listen. Tutees don't sit still. What the tutees need is discipline! The usual structures of education emerge. That is when the structures can be examined.

Literacy denied is not the same as literacy availed. Denial changes literacy. Literacy is not difficult to deny. In South Carolina the basic-skills assessment program assesses the need for remediation. The basic-skills test asks that students be able to do several things: decode word meaning, identify main ideas, understand references and inferences, and analyze literature. In the decoding segment the student is tested on sight recognition, phonetic decoding, contextual word meaning, and structural word meaning. Main ideas must be identified as restated, paraphrased, or inferred. Analysis of literature is a matter of information, structural elements, rhetorical devices, and critical analysis. Students who can do these things need no remediation; they are literate. Students who cannot do these things find themselves in classes devoted to their becoming literate. One wonders if inference is a really a problem. Students in the project clearly infer the difference between their usual schooling and the project.

A seventh-grade tutor writes: "Do you have to go to collage to be a teacher? What kind of education do you have to have? If you do have to go to collage how many years do you have to go? . . . I really would like to know." A participant in the project is asked to describe the difference between a teacher and a cross-age tutor and replies, "I guess a good teacher is a cross-age tutor."

During the summer, a young tutee writes for the project newsletter: "My name is Dennis. I gat your letter. thank you I had a good summer I passed to the Second Grade I will be happy wheen school starts." The editor of the newsletter, a tutor in the science project, prefaced the newsletter by saying, "It is through education that we succeed." Plenty of inference here.

The model of cross-age tutoring is an alternative, a different literacy. It sets a course. What is to become of the course?

The underlying purpose of cross-age tutoring is to change education. In the face of the bureaucratic mess of state mandates, teacher powerlessness, and chronic shortfalls in funding, change may not seem possible. Change may seem slow. Small, poor schools sigh to gain small, inexpensive changes, hoping that large changes will come later. They are paralyzed by test scores.

They are wrong. The forms of education today, particularly the batteries of standardized tests, are very much different from the past forms. The miserable treatment of poor and minority students in the United States is perpetuated; it is not a natural disaster. Arbitrary changes in policy can radically reorganize a school's curriculum, routine, and accountability. In South Carolina, policies change with stunning regularity.

Nothing is shown more clearly by the cross-age tutoring project than the eagerness with which students embrace opportunities to learn. Nothing is clearer than the speed with which the students do it. In an hour's time, two small boys can work together to achieve a literacy that one or two or six years of schooling have not been able to produce. In one semester, six middle-school students can jump two grade levels on reading tests, can test out of remedial English altogether. In a thirty-minute training session, five fragile little children can acquire the ability to tutor five fragile little children and, when a sixth fragile tutor joins the group, to show her how to do the same. In a college chemistry lab, ninth-grade physical science students who have had no hands-on contact in a laboratory setting, who have minimal reading skills, who have no familiarity with complicated terminology, and who have little experience with sophisticated computation can learn to successfully conduct and document college-level chemistry experiments. Change is not only fast but profound.

It is the mechanisms of educational change that are slow and that impede the possibilities of literacy. The cross-age model, as much as anything else, undermines mechanistic behavior. It demonstrates the power of students—even very young students and especially poor and at-risk students—to empower themselves and to change education in the process.

In the 1990s the image of a cadre of dustbin students going up against the system is Dickensian with a twist. The industry of labor is now the service of information. Those of us who have the luxury to pun can afford Dickens; those of us who are the pun cannot. The choices we make in literacy education today determine the lives of students. We have several choices. Cross-age tutoring is merely a suggestion of one choice.[1]

NOTE

[1] The cross-age tutoring project in 1988–90 continued to produce remarkable results. Test scores improved, and more students became adept at electronic mail. Sites continued to multiply across the state. A new twist to the program proved particularly successful: a group of students became both tutors and tutees. The teachers named these students double-hitters because these middle-level students were tutored by high school seniors, and then they themselves tutored first-graders. The school superintendent for one of the smallest and most impoverished districts, an unusual superintendent in his concern and willingness to take risks, worked with the project to write a $300,000 three-year proposal to the state for programs for the at-risk students in his district. The project was not funded.

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Hume Fogg Academic High School

"Professional writers do this every day. Sometimes your writing gives you starters. It's your mind saying you need to follow up and carry it further."

"Abundance, abundance, abundance," I tell them. "Good writing is culled from an abundance of possibilities. Then you simplify."

The next day we broke into groups of four or five for peer evaluation and positive suggestions for improvement.

"When you revise, think of your audience as anyone out there who might be interested in the life of the planet. Make sure, first, that the piece is clear. If you stumble in your reading, think about some way to rephrase that passage." I told them to look for strengths—the sharp image, the striking turn of phrase, the precise verb.

We read pieces again, looking for ways to make the writing better by cutting, simplifying, and sharpening the language.

By the end of the hour most of the students were well on their way to a piece of writing ready for a wider audience. All their reading, thinking, and writing was coming down to a finished piece or two.

Alternatives

Having students write in a natural environment is important, but it isn't absolutely necessary. It is even possible to write about the natural world without leaving the classroom—from photos, music, magazines, and videotapes on nature, or from memory. "Close your eyes," I say, "and film the following images and events from your own life. Find a body of water—creek, lake, river, ocean, or just an old drainage ditch in your neighborhood. See this place in your mind. Get into a comfortable position. Sit on a log; lean against a tree. When you open your eyes, fast write about your special place. Describe it, relive an event that happened there, create a new one. Authenticate your writing with specific details. Make your audience know the experience is real."

Having students bring natural objects works well in a classroom setting—leaves, flowers, tree bark, rocks, milkweed pods, turtle shells. I tell them to live with these objects for a few days. Smell, touch, and see each thing. The most simple pieces of nature can inspire a sense of wonder and help trigger student writing.

We are fortunate to have a bit of the natural world so well preserved right here in Nashville, only a few minutes from the school. The immediate experience of observing and writing quietly in a natural environment helps the students learn respect for their subject. Good writing comes easily when students care about what they're saying. Working together gives them a sense of audience. They aren't turning out school writing to be read by the teacher. They are writing for themselves, for each other — finally, for anyone who will listen.

No matter what the students write, if they gain respect for the environment they will have learned a most valuable lesson.

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Contradiction

The sky is baby blue; the sun is shining on the lake—it hurts my eyes. The golden autumn leaves crunch under foot. The wind comes and goes, slightly touching my hair. I can see my reflection in the water, distorted by falling leaves. We're all observing, trying to capture some of this beauty with words. I'm not sure if there are words to express the beauty of this place. You can touch the water, walk over leaves, let the sun shine on tired eyes, but it cannot be taken away. Everything that is here must stay here.

Somehow it seems ironic that not a mile away there are shopping malls, clothing stores, businesses, cars coming and going. Yet in the middle of all the confusion, there's this lake, as if there were nothing beyond or before this point. There's a spiderweb being woven a little ways from me. The spider spins, and goes further and further down, close to the Japanese honeysuckle berries. I watch the others write, wondering if time is as special to them, wondering if they can express the words I feel.

Janice Moore

Nightwalk

I goose-step through a six-inch snow
walking myself white.
I reach the garage,
cross to walk behind it,
going down the runoff ditch
next to the Witherspoons' fence.
I can't see anger leaving with the moisture in my breath,
can't observe fear puddled in my footprints,
but
I know they're fading—
every blizzard-like swirl of emotion—
because it doesn't hurt to look at the clouds,
at the courageous branches of silver maples
and sassafras.
When the inside storm is over
I finally get down to
just the wonder.

Wendy Bozarth

Frustration

I cannot write
about the beauty of the golden earth.
The sky is crowded with CFC's,
the soil, crammed with
yesterday's Big Mac containers and diapers.
Man's miraculous development
has left the earth behind,
forgetting it is our mother.
Without it,
man's accomplishments
stand alone.
For man cannot step
without a surface
or breathe carbon dioxide.
There will be no news anchors left
to depict the dying planet,
and the stoic satellites in space
will beep unanswered signals
to an earth that no longer will exist.

Catherine Mueller

Dead Ducks

Hunting with my grandfather,
five-thirty on a December morning,
seven-years-old, just along for the ride.
A flock of mallards graces
the dawn's pink sky.
Feathers, green and blue and brown
glisten in the morning.
The men grab their guns
and rush to the front of the blind.
My eyes squeeze shut and I cover my ears
as the crack of gunfire rumbles in the morning,
echoing like thunder,
soon fading into men's laughter of approval.
Dead ducks in the cold, dark corner.
Their stone cold eyes seem to ask me why,
but I cannot answer that for myself.
Steam rises from their limp bodies
as the tears burn my icy face.

Kerry McCoin

Thoreau Day at Radnor Lake

by Bill Brown and Malcolm Glass

At the lake

After reading a section of Thoreau's *Walden*, one of my students remarked, "'Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity,' and all we do at this school is complicate, complicate, complicate." This thought lingered in my head as I sat at the edge of the water early in the morning waiting for my junior English students to report for our annual Thoreau Day at Nashville's Radnor Lake. A jet at thirty thousand feet flew toward Memphis, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, following the sun. Its glint reflected from the water's surface. The jet's passengers didn't know a lake in Tennessee held their picture, then let it go, owning for a moment every object that had borrowed this piece of sky.

I had told my students that Emerson said we must become as "transparent eyeballs," to observe nature with all our senses, and in this way we might catch a fleeting glimpse of eternity, intuit the harmony of nature unfolding like the united cells of a great brain thinking its way into existence. For all my philosophizing, my students sent me the "Golden Turkey" award for Thanksgiving. It was signed by the "Transparent Eyeballs." Our field trip to the lake would give them a chance to live, for a short while, the words of Emerson and Thoreau. My revery was broken by the sound of voices as students began to arrive and huddle together to ward off the morning chill.

The words, "simplicity, simplicity, simplicity," ran through my mind, and I decided to keep the day less structured than the last trip. When all the students had seated themselves on a small slope leading down to Radnor Lake, I leaned against a maple and started. I reminded them that we were there "to spend a day as deliberately as nature," as Thoreau said, "to front [in our small way] the essential facts of life," away from the home or school setting. I said that we were visitors in a state natural area and that we should only speak in small voices. We agreed to spend periodic quiet time so that individuals could take in the surroundings with their senses and make small descriptive or reflective journal entries.

For two weeks we had read work by a number of nature writers—traditional, modern, and contemporary. We had shared writings and slides from previous Thoreau Day experiences. There were several types of responses that we could identify. Many writers had focused on small natural events like a spider building its web, an ant carrying a moth wing over a leaf, a nuthatch climbing upside down on an oak limb, or a coot diving deep for minnows. Often students wrote about the contrasts of the everyday world to the natural setting of woods and lake. Some of the best writing came when students described their classmates' specific experiences, from rolling in the leaves to falling asleep in the sun. Many journal entries were private, emotional reactions that ranged from feelings of romance to a sense of fragility in the face of an environmentally endangered planet.

Before we broke up in groups to hike, I read a journal entry I had made earlier that morning. To set the tone for the day, we got quiet for a few minutes, let our senses take in the morning air, and wrote.

As my colleague, Alice Sanford, said, "Thoreau's work is too big to be taught exclusively in a classroom setting." On this November day, we hiked a lake trail and a wooded path that led to a high ridge above the open water, stopping every fifteen minutes to listen or write. At one time a doe and her fawn strolled the hill above us and paused to stare at the human intruders. The students spent the rest of the time in small groups or alone, enjoying life at a slower pace, celebrating a day away from the crowded school halls. Friends shared journals and selected short excerpts to present at a class reading which signaled an unwelcome close to a special day.

Hume-Fogg junior Sara Wood at Radnor Lake outing.

Photo by Malcolm Glass

Back at school

The next morning we were back in our familiar school environment. Laughter bounced down the hallways. Students jostled each other on the stairs as they hurried to class. The big table in my room was covered with literary magazines, scrap paper, lost notebooks, and candy wrappers—the usual. One student jabbed another playfully in the ribs. Groans and giggles.

I wondered why we spend so much time living this way. I wondered if anyone else was wondering the same thing. The bell rang. The intercom rasped out word of yet another bake sale. People settled into their desks, resigned. Class finally began.

"First of all," I said, "I want to thank you all for a good Thoreau Day. Thanks for keeping that quiet mood." The room was hushed. For a moment it felt like we were out by the lake again. And I imagined that each person in the room was lost in a memory or two: discovering why sycamores grow on creek banks, how "Hearts 'abustin'" got its name.

"When's the Melville paper due?" Jason asked.

"Hold on," I said. "Thoreau Day isn't over yet. Let's get a few pieces of writing in shape for publication." They knew this meant everything from sticking poems on the bulletin board to getting into print in one of our student magazines.

I had them read through everything they had written since we began the Emerson-Thoreau unit. "Pick out the best four or five journal entries and fast-writings at the lake," I told them. "Then read those again, looking for that 'Aha!' piece of writing, paragraph, idea, or image that might make a reader sit up and take notice."

They read. Then they looked at each other's work and starred pieces or portions of entries that they found surprising, honest, alive.

"This is the only thing I really like," Allan said, pointing to a three-sentence description of canvasback ducks landing on the lake.

"So, go off in the corner and start with that observation and write a new fast-writing. Keep going 'til you fill a page or more."

Allan looked bewildered or discouraged; I'm not sure which. "Look," I tell him,

Starring: Hume-Fogg Academic High School Nashville, TN

This was the third year of the Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program's support of Hume-Fogg's writing workshops and publications. This year we wanted to continue giving Hume-Fogg's 480 students the opportunity to write as much as possible, and then provide them audiences outside the classroom through school publications, entries in state and national contests, and manuscript submissions to college journals, little magazines, and national student publications. This goal included involving every language-arts teacher in the process. It also included having four student publications, one for each grade, which would be designed, edited, and laid out by students.

In October, the two ninth-grade teachers and I held a three-week in-class writing workshop for all freshmen. Each student had to share, revise, and prepare a personal anthology of short works taken from the fast writings. Next, each student was to discover an event or unusual situation in their writings which could be expanded into an informal biographical essay or short story. Two of these students are up for National Scholastic Awards, and a large percentage of the ninth-grade class entered the Mid-State Wordfest.

In the tenth grade, students are using the same process as the freshmen. Besides the six to eight essays each English student completes in a normal class at Hume-Fogg, the tenth-grade teachers held a workshop on the short story and the personal essay. Some tenth graders have established a writing workshop which meets Thursday after school, with their teacher, Gianne Harmon. I feel a real sense of writing community developing from this. This class had the largest single entry in the Mid-State Wordfest, and one student took first place in a national writing contest.

As usual, we held our eleventh-grade Thoreau/Walden unit at Radnor Lake Wilderness Area. We prepared by spending two weeks discussing and making journal entries on writings of Thoreau and Emerson, and we had two beautiful days in the woods hiking and writing. Glencliff High students joined us one day to photograph our workshop.

Juniors and seniors in my creative writing class collaborated on *Alive in the Nuclear Age*. Eight of these students have already had work accepted for publication in college journals, and two are up for national awards.

There was so much good writing before Christmas that the art teacher, Pam Bergman, and I gathered materials for a total-school *Fogg*, which makes five publications that these students have written and produced this year.

Bill Brown

Inward Glances

Freshman Class

Rejection

All I remember is going fast.
So fast, I couldn't stop.
I went flying into the rocks.
Tears and blood.
I stumbled home.
I screamed at you,
even pointed to the blood,
Hoping you'd see the pain.
You overlooked the blood, tears,
and even the pain.
All you could see was the hole,
and the lost dollars were looking back at you.

—Beth McInerney

The End of an Era: Eight Years of Mom and Me

We moved on a bright Saturday morning, to a condo near the office. Mom started to cry as we left our old house, full of doubts about herself and her independence. She was scared of this new life. Was she as headstrong as she thought she was? Was her mother right, did every woman really need a man? I vowed then and there to protect her. After all, if I didn't, who would?
While my mother worked on her dissertation, I remember thinking that maybe the reason she was writing it was that she wanted a promotion at work. But now I know that she needed an escape...something she could involve herself in completely and forget about it all.

When Mom went to classes, I went with her. I would sit at the front desk and answer the phone. "Hello, Peabody Annex, may I help you?" I thought I was so grown up. Mom thought I was emotionally distressed. She would ask me, "Honey, how do you feel?" She used the word "feel" a lot. I thought she was nuts....

Christmas must have been really hard for her that year. It was her first Christmas alone, but it was even harder because Dad came to watch me open my Christmas presents. I got a tape recorder, the "Grease" soundtrack, and roller skates. I acted obnoxious, but they both kept smiling. I never realized how difficult that was, for both of them, until now.

It was midnight when the pipes broke. They had frozen, and they exploded. Water went everywhere. It was two inches high on the floor. That was it. This was Mom's first test, the first thing she had to do independently, without Daddy, without anyone but herself.

And she did it...beautifully...running around the living room in a nightshirt, putting chairs atop tables, and tables atop the sofa. She handled that with so much strength that I, a seven year old with security blankets, was not even scared. She was brilliant under pressure....

—Katie Hammer

The Great Wall

I couldn't understand
what they were talking about.
The picture was pretty, but
why did the Chinese build that big wall?

"To keep people out."

Why couldn't they climb over?

"It was too tall."

Then how did they get high enough to build it?
Wait!
Why didn't they want people to come in?
Can't they knock it down?
Don't leave. Answer me!

That's when I get frustrated
and confused.
I go to that place,
cram myself into the square
hole that I'm becoming
too big for and think.

I can tell that the stuffed animals
are on my side.
The world comes back
to my size.
My blanket covers me,
and I stop trying to figure out
why walls are important
to China.

—Sara Dewitt

CLASS ACTS

Beyond the Garden Wall
Sophomore Class

College Change
The cold wind stings my face
As we walk down the dock.
It must be below freezing out here
But you don't seem to notice.
The river looks peaceful
With the city lights
Reflecting off her water.
Several ducks paddle by
Barely disturbing the stillness.
They look miniature
Floating down the big river.
The time is close to midnight,
I have to go home soon.
I try not to think about you
Leaving tomorrow.
Things will no longer be the same.
You will change while you're at college
Growing more independent.
I will change over the next few years, too.
When you come to visit
We will go down to the river.
The lights will still reflect
Off her gleaming water
And the ducks
Will still paddle by.

—Ivey Loftin

Leroy
His chaps are splattered
with spots of rich, red earth
kicked up by cattle
during the round-up this morning.
Lying across his knee
is a tarnished and tattered saddle,
worn thin over the years
and shiny with oil spread on.
His eyes twinkling
in the creases of a sun and wind-dried face,
the master story-teller unwinds
tales of the old days:
outlaws, showdowns, and the hero
(always in a white hat)
riding off into the sunset.

—Carla Coleman

Chinatown
I saw,
in the middle of Chinatown,
among the benches full of people feeding the pigeons,
the clusters of shops and restaurants with the different smells of food,
and the rise and fall of the languages mixing,
a huge fountain.
It was a rock-like mound with small plateaus protruding within it.
There was a certain mystique in the various beaten up pans
with signs in front of them, like
long life, health, marriage, money, success.
Then the big sign in front of the funny looking wise man
sitting in the middle—
it had paint and plaster chipping from age that said "WISHING WELL"
It almost forced you to throw a coin,
to try your luck at the future.
The young couples, laughing and smiling at the absurd thought
of actually having faith in this ancient idea,
carelessly tossed at money, success, marriage.
Then an old man quietly walked up to the well.
Digging deep, deep into the pockets of his pants—
finally recovered a coin.
He surveyed the multiple choices, closed his eyes and tossed his coin
carefully at long life.
He missed and slowly walked away, both hands in his pockets—
found another coin.
Anxiously he hurried back and tried again;
this time the coin rolled right into the middle of the pan—
in its hollow sound, hope.

—Marjie Long

Radnor Lake Writing Workshop
Junior Class

A Turn of the Other Cheek
The chatter of the leaves
blends
into a dry drizzle,
some falling
like pure vermilion butterflies.
The wind
blows life
into
this living inanimation,
this city of thin,
considerate skyscrapers,
of birds honking their horns
(with a polite urgency)
through the rush hour traffic of leaves.

Quietly,
the trail pushes on,
uncomplaining,
and a man trudges ahead
ignoring his reflection
in the lake,
bent and broken
in a ripple.

—Irwin Chen

Mystery
I used to march out to my farm,
armed smartly with field guides, binoculars,
bird books, reptile books, bug books, and mammal books,
and I'd name everything.
I knew when and how to eat chickweed and chicory.
I could graze for a full week in the spring.

Every tree, bush, grass and creature was
classified—pegged,
mine.
I was important,
self-righteous,
I could name them all.

But today,
when asked the name of a sumac,
I stared at my pea-green shoes.
Does it really matter, sir?

I know how to infuse it into tea—
its spicy taste,
its grainy yet soft bark, and earthy smell.
I know its habits and peculiarities.
I respect it.

How superior and safe I used to feel to title
Oaks, Poplars, Birch, and Maples

I could then dismiss each—
Mundane
Subdued
Conquered.

—Rebecca Seaman

CLASS ACTS

New Girl

It is very strange to see
how some people
react to new ideas.

A girl from D.C.
went with us today
to the woods.
She was so scared of being lost
that she would step
on the heels
of my shoes,
trying to keep found.

I wish I could show her
how to take walks alone,
how to get lost and find yourself
again.
I wish I could tell her
the joy of walking your own trail and
how to get scratches from going
off the old one.
I wish I could make her know
how beautiful it is
not to be on display to others,
not to need to cope with people.

Her friend, creeping
up from behind,
touched her neck and
yelled,
"Poison ivy!"

—*Elliot Williams*

Jeremiah, the City Boy

Jeremiah, he's a city boy who
comes here full of images
of wild things with shiny fangs.

Chipmunks, glowing sunsets, and narcotic
sunshine
don't impress him.

Jeremiah wants lions and saber toothed
tigers
(who are only slightly sleepy)
so he can win.

As if a deer's pelt can really hide a
balding scalp.
Maybe it can.

Jeremiah dabbles in invisible fatigues,
sneaks and creeps loudly,
leaving a trail of tobacco drool.

Don't eat the berries, Jeremiah.
Stay on the trail.

—*Rebecca Seaman*

Alive in the Nuclear Age

Senior Class

Septic Tank Survival

When I was nine,
I wanted goldfish desperately,
and badgered my mother
until she bought me two.
one was solid gold, the other mixed with
black.
Yes!
The responsibility was all mine.
I had pets!
With my pockets full of money,
I bought a round glass bowl
and swirly blue pebbles
and flaked food
that smelled disgusting.
Everyday,
I cleaned the bowl of slime
and changed the water,
for a few weeks—
until the thrill of fish wore off.
A few days later,
after agonizing what to do with them,
I flushed the fish down the toilet
where I knew
there was always fresh water.
When my mother asked about their progress,
I proudly told her
they were alive and well
and living in the toilet.
Slightly irritated, she said
that fish can't live in toilets.
I had killed them.
Guilt and shame overcame me,
and when my mother wasn't looking,
I went to the bathroom,
knelt down,
bent my head inside the rim,
and apologized.

—*Rebecca Bice*

Jeremy Wirth

A Junior at the Radnor Lake Writing Workshop.

Suthe

Before birth,
a Hindu priest dressed in orange
swore to their perfect marriage made in
heaven,
but the children never saw each other's faces
before
the boy slipped in a well and
became rare food for the snakes.
The mother cut the girl's hair
leaving only stubble on the white scalp.
The girl wept for days,
no one to love this witch
who had cursed her husband.

Wrapped in white cloth
like a little God,
a sacrifice of innocence,
she waited for a savior.

At first it was a game,
all this attention from older people.
She was the toast of the town,
then she screamed,
as a circle of fire crept closer,
frantically running,
begging to anyone,
but no help for this brave child
as the chanting grew louder.
Let this witch burn in hell
for killing the beautiful boy
and let the young girls watch
so they might not be so easily possessed.
Let them follow us to bury
her ashes beside his bones,
there is a price to pay for heaven.

—*Anoop Singh*

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CLASS ACTS

Water Tank
We walked up the gravel road
You on one rut and I on the other,
Kicking the tops off the weeds with our toes,
Spraying black powder on our socks.
The dogs frisked behind us
And filled the spaces of our silence with
their yelps.
We were eleven,
But you were five months older and three
inches taller.
We checked the berries expertly.
Each popped a red one into our mouths on
"Go!"
We dared each other with our stares
To pucker and lose the bet.
Unable to break tradition,
I spat out the red mush.
You grinned, swallowing, and called me a
"sissy girl."
Climbing through the secret hole in the
barbed wire,
We continued our trek
Up the steep foothill.
The waist high grass tickled our elbows
And burs stuck in armies on our clothes.
We finally got to the water tank.
Climbing the rusted iron ladder which left
our hands red,
We perched on the warped redwood slats
And raced with shoes, socks, and shirts,
Heedless of rules about such behavior at our
ages.
Pausing for the countdown,
As we balanced our toes on the rough edge,
I sensed an unfamiliar discomfort
When you turned your body from me
slightly,
Shielding yourself from my gaze, until on
"...three,"
We dove into the icy water.
—Tawney Grantham

For Jim, the Fish-Boy
I called him fish.
His eyes were distorted under his glasses
and his forehead bulged out a bit.
Cheeks and lips puffed up
when he was quiet and apart from us.
Spiked hair ran over like a dorsal fin.
I'd always look over to the other canoe
and no matter how far away he was
I could still see the features.
Up close I could tell
he'd had open heart surgery:
a long shiny-pink ridge
running down his sternum
reminded me of the queasiness that comes
with the first cut of the knife
in the belly of a walleye
leaving a hole into the soft inner structure.
One day we took a break from paddling
and landed on gray-white slabs of Canadian
Shield.
Scott pointed out the minnow
left in a tiny puddle by higher water.
Subject of conversation changed to hunger
and then to eating and then daring to eat
and suddenly Jim had the little thing
dripping in his hands.
Brian said he'd give him his share of dessert.
Down it went, only a tiny one. Only a
twitch.
The fish looked up then and smiled,
suddenly realizing that swallowing wasn't
that bad.
And I had to look twice behind his jaw
because I thought I'd seen gills.
—John Post

We have a few extra copies of this year's Hume-Fogg publications. If you or your students would like to get a copy to use in your classroom, please write to Susan Walker, Bread Loaf and the Schools, *with a description of how you and your students would like to use the material.*

Jesus the great sinner
After school one day
I walked across the street
to wait for my bus
humming some of my favorite tunes

A car stopped in front of me
Four beer-bellied guys
who hadn't shaved that morning
asked me where Printer's Alley was
"You know, the whores and all that bitchy
stuff"
"You know"

As if I knew
Why did they think that?
Both of my parents are preachers
I go to church on Sundays and Wednesdays
read the Bible
and always look for God in everyday
occurrences
How would I know
Then, I realized I did know

And just as there is
no up without down
There can be no appreciation
of what is right without understanding
the dangers of what is wrong

Maybe the best Christian was a great sinner
at one time

I hope they enjoyed themselves
Praise the Lord!
—R. O. Mitchell

The South Carolina Rural Writing Network

WORK IN PROGRESS

Nurturing learning: the Bread Loaf Rural Writing Network in South Carolina

by Ike Coleman

If I had to find a metaphor for the Bread Loaf Rural Writing Network in South Carolina, I'd ask Ken Macrorie if I could borrow his Moebius strip. I see the teachers and students breaking down the walls we've built to isolate school from community, discrete skills from the wholeness of learning, teacher from student, and the classroom from life. At first glance, though, an outsider would be more likely to compare us to an amoeba multiplying wildly—into different animals. Often I'm asked to describe the project. "What are the teachers and students doing as part of the Network?" they say.

"Which teacher or student?" I reply. The truth is hard to explain. Each school has undertaken an independent search designed by teachers and students. At Gilbert, for instance, students and teachers are interviewing elders in the tiny rural community about life there in the recent past, before the small chicken and vegetable farms gave way to the beginnings of a bedroom community for the larger towns of Lexington and Columbia; before people living in the Saluda River Valley were forced to sell their homeplaces for fifteen dollars an acre so the power company could flood the land where half-acre lots today sell for $25,000.

In the process, students learn a great deal about communication: how, for instance, to nurture stories instead of facts, like the tale of Vastine Wessinger, who lay down in a dirt road to stop the mule wagons pulling logs from the area soon to be Lake Murray. Students face the issues of editing for publication: how faithful one must be to the spoken word and to the speaker when turning talk into writing; or the problems involved in publishing the story of a father's moonshining days. And kids explore the relation between life and the written word: the leap from the life of a sharecropper born in a cabin with cracks so large snow fell inside as well as out, to the version of that story sent by pressing a couple of keys on a computer to hundreds of people all over the state.

Even to say each school is doing something different is too simple, though. At Tamassee-Salem High the students are researching the Cherokee culture, past and present. One day an archaeologist visited the classes to talk about the origins of the Cherokees 10,000 years ago. A week later Bob and Dean Reed, full-blooded Native Americans, showed the students how to make traditional pottery and arrowheads. While Bob transformed a piece of flint into a perfectly shaped spearpoint, the kids interviewed him on tape, later to write a newspaper article from the transcript. And in the last few minutes of class, the students took a piece of flint and began chipping away.

> The Bread Loaf Rural Writing Network in South Carolina, directed by Ike Coleman, is Project IV funded by Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity. A variant on the Maine writing network model under Nancie Atwell's direction, the South Carolina project is designed to improve writing proficiency with emphasis on writing in the humanities. It focuses on several small schools in South Carolina (where two-thirds of the school districts are rural and nearly a third of the students don't finish ninth grade), working to promote individual writing projects for each school and to provide ways for isolated teachers to share common concerns with their colleagues throughout the state. The program is based at Clemson University, one of the two major universities in the state, with the enthusiastic support of the S.C. Department of Education, Clemson University officials, and English Department Head William Koon. It also has the privilege of using the splendid services of Clemson's statewide computer network, CUFAN.

Each student at Salem has chosen a focus for writing. André Brown is responsible for documenting the progress of the Bread Loaf work in his class, and he has published two articles in local newspapers, as well as letters, journal entries, and interviews sent over the computer network. Several other students are writing a play, guided by Gary Carden, a professional playwright who drives down from North Carolina once a week, about the legend of Jocassee, a Cherokee analogue to *Romeo and Juliet*. Den Latham, the project's lead teacher, tells the story of one of the students. "Carl Duckett wouldn't breathe the same air with an English teacher at the beginning of the year. Now he's arguing with the other kids about whether exposition is best handled by actors or narrator." Still other students are carving a dugout canoe out of the traditionally preferred wood—yellow locust—and writing an I-search paper to be shared with students from another state over BreadNet.

But in all this diversity I see the unity of the Moebius strip. In Tony Burgess' class at Oxford last summer, a student said, "I like the metaphor of coming home to the experience of being human by celebrating our diversity." That, I think, is the only way to get on the Moebius strip—to explore diversity until we reach the realization that we're all one. Sometimes, though, coming together is not so easy as it sounds. In a computer exchange between kids in the foothills of the southern Appalachians and a New York City public school, a South Carolina student wrote, "I wouldn't care if anyone from another race came to Salem." People who've been to that corner of the South know how slim is the chance of that happening. But all sorts of people are coming by electronic mail, and Salem will never be the same after the struggle to deal with other cultures' visions of life, from ancient Cherokee to New York Hispanic.

Appreciation of individual diversity is another basis for the Network and paradoxically another route to our unity. Instead of the conventional attempts to individualize instruction—that favorite of administrators which essentially means to devise 130 different strategies to teach 130 students subordinate clauses at the same time—teachers in the Network have realized that if we can just let the kids find something real they want to do and help them do it, individualization takes care of itself.

Doug Drafts, a student at Gilbert taking tenth-grade English for the third time, is now the project technical expert for his school. Teachers deciding what

Doug should learn when, based on what he can't do, would notice Doug's spelling is awful. But when, with a real job to do, the school was desperate to find someone who could print out their folklore magazine from disk using a couple of different word-processing packages, teachers discovered Doug could program computers in two languages. Like Doug, many students—artists, interviewers, speakers, editors—lost in the traditional attempts to teach everyone the same things at the same time, are finding a niche in the real work of their schools, work built on the students' learning and the expertise they already have.

Perhaps I've given the impression that the success of the Network is only due to its design—or lack of one. In truth, teachers are the heroes in this story. And, like students, great teachers deserve an audience for their loving work. I'd like others to see Den Latham hold a writing conference about a student's love poetry during his smoking area duty outside in January; or Susan Wright, a computer teacher who, without a stipend, has surrendered her planning periods so that other teachers in the project can bring their students in to type their writing onto disks; or Sandra Strange, who is concerned about the emotional effect on her students of the acoustics in her decades-old classroom, but never mentions the gnats flying into her mouth as she tries to write state-required skills documentation in the minuscule faculty lounge with a yellowing sign on the wall that says in large letters:

If You QUIT
You Are INELIGIBLE
For Unemployment
Compensation

I've watched these teachers and many more, too numerous to include in an anecdote, begin to demolish the barriers between school and life, to discard measurable behavioral objectives and Bloom's Taxonomy. In doing so, they've stopped trying to be Moses bringing the tablets from a mountain none of their students has seen. Gradually teachers and students become one as they realize you can't teach anybody anything; you can only nurture learning. But what learning! Nancy Bickley, a teacher at Gilbert, wrote in the preface to an article about the project, "At one time the students were embarrassed by what they considered the backward ways of their parents and grandparents. But now they're proud of their heritage and their community." When we step down from the arrogance of deciding what the students will learn in what order of discrete skills, but instead allow them contact with life, we open the way for this learning, too rich and too deep to be taught.

"Shocking the students":

an interview with Den Latham

by André Brown

Mark displays his beautifully crafted arrows at the Rural Writing Network Conference in May. Interviewer André Brown is sitting immediately to the right.

André: At this point, how do you think the project's developing?

Den: The project has so many different things going on. Let's talk about the play first. I've read the script you guys have been working on with Gary Carden [the playwright]. This is the first time that students of mine have ever been in a workshop with a professional writer. A lot of the students have never seen a stage play. Many have never even read one, except perhaps for *Romeo and Juliet* this year. The script has evolved by Gary taking the directions and dialogue students have written and weaving them into scenes—using his own writing as a model.

To write a play which is dramatically sound is difficult. There have been problems—the fact that you guys meet just once a week. Also, the deadlines, having to get your scenes written and in the mail to Gary so he can read them before the next workshop. But all in all, it's a valuable experience: the workshops, the production, actually acting it out—a script which you've written.

André: In your opinion, how does our outdoor drama compare to other student writing?

Den: It's exceptional because you guys have had the benefit of working with a professional writer who really knows the theater. I've written some short plays and I've acted, but I don't have nearly as much experience as Gary has—to know what will work on stage and what won't. A lot of that is trial and error. Knowing what scenes are going to be effective.

André: Do you feel that next year things will run more smoothly?

Den: Absolutely. This is a year of laying ground work. Of finding out how to use computers for electronic mail—that's been an incredible hassle. Of finding people in the community who are resources, like Duke Power, for instance. . .

I'm also finding out what kind of writing assignments work well for the students, and how and where to publish their writing. It's all happened this year.

André: Do you make the assignments, or do you let students write about what they feel like?

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Den: That's a good question. Almost invariably I let them choose because I feel that's where motivation comes from. That's why researching the Cherokee culture, making the crafts, is such a fine idea. It opens itself up to just about anything. If a student's interested in medicine, or dance, or archaeology, or wood crafts, pottery, painting, mythology, drama—there's hardly a topic a student can think of that's not in it. It's great. It allows me not to have to make assignments. The students make their own. I just help them, give direction, encourage them along the way.

My role as a teacher, I've discovered, more and more in working with you, Melissa, Ann, Angi, and the others, is really that of a concerned editor.

André: What about the crafts?

Den: Have you seen Mark's stuff? Have you seen the arrow he made? It's really a work of art. Mark is one of those very quiet people that sits in the back of the class and falls through the cracks. Now, because of this project, he's taken off. In fact, he is the expert in making arrows and blow guns.

"My role is really that of a concerned editor"

We're talking about crafts, you see, but I have to look at it from the standpoint of an English teacher. When the state basic skills exams are over, and I get him and others to write search papers on what they've done, when Mark, for example, puts all his experience down on paper, that's going to make some very interesting reading.

André: So you're saying that it will be easier for Mark or anyone else who enjoys doing a craft to write?

Den: That is the thing I've found out about teaching writing. The first thing the students must have—or a teacher must provide—is an experience to write from. That's why a lot of the writing in public schools is crap. The topics are forced, the students are uninterested.

Tamassee-Salem High School is participating in the South Carolina Rural Writing Network. It is located in a tiny community in mountainous northwest South Carolina, about five miles from the Chattooga River, which marks the Georgia-South Carolina border. Bread Loafer Den Latham, a teacher at Tamassee-Salem, is heading up—or, rather, standing back while his ninth-grade students take over—a complex project on Cherokee culture and lore. The project focuses on writing and producing a play about a Cherokee legend reminiscent of the situation in *Romeo and Juliet*. But far more than legend is involved, as students learn and write about Cherokee history, material culture and arts—sometimes from Cherokees themselves. Along the way, they're learning a number of skills useful in their own culture; the project has them learning by doing and participating in real situations, not phony classroom mockups of life.

Interviewer André Brown, himself the subject of a recent interview, commented, "Students—even if they are making F's and O's—have a spark, and the teacher has to find it." One of the concerns uppermost in the minds of Bread Loaf teachers and Director Paul Cubeta is how to keep that spark, once found, kindled. André Brown is one of Den Latham's students—and the only ninth grader ever invited to work at Bread Loaf for a summer.

This project's so exciting because it gives students experience. They plan and write letters to arrange field trips. They use tape recorders and computers and cameras occasionally. It may seem like a slight thing, but they use the telephone to arrange workshops with adults.

. . . . We do too much for students in the name of "help" and consequently hold them back. The project is opening up the students and taking down the walls.

André: What do you ask from the students? What do you expect?

Den: Let me talk about the writing. I expect substantial journal entries, notetaking during presentations—of course we have quizzes on those, as you know. I expect letters sent electronically to other students in Bread Loaf projects. I expect written interviews and search papers in which they tell the story of their individual projects: how they learned to make Cherokee pottery, the field trips they were on, the people they talked with, the problems and success they encountered as they worked, and also final evaluations at the end of the year from every student and every adult involved from Sam Bass right on down, from Gale and Walt [the crafts people]. An honest evaluation—what went right, what didn't go right that we can change next year.

I expect students to take part in the planning. Some things, such as archaeology, Cherokee medicine, field trips, have not happened yet. They just have to wait 'til spring. Michelle Winchester gave me a letter today to Ann Rogers, an archaeologist at Western Carolina University, asking for her help in organizing a dig.

André: How is electronic mail helping us?

Den: It's very motivational. At first it's a new toy. It's fascinating to learn to use. But then, because revision on the word processor is so easy, student writing improves. Especially—this is the essential thing—electronic mail gives the students a reading audience outside the classroom and the school. They aren't writing for an English teacher who already knows what they're going to say. To be understood, they have to fully explain, to think about what is and isn't in their reader's mind . . . .

André: Do you feel like you've had a lot of cooperation from the visitors who've come into class?

Den: Everybody's really excited. Take Dot Robinson [*Greenville News* reporter]. She's ecstatic that we're exploring the Indian culture. She wants us to write something about the Trail of Tears, which has its centennial next year. Take Bob and Dean [Cherokees from the reservation in North Carolina]. They said that you guys were the finest students that they'd ever met.

Den Latham talks to researcher Diane Hoffman (see "An ill-defined problem") and middle-school teacher Jo Ann Wigington at the May Conference in Clemson.

Ann Rogers is excited. Amos Chandler, a retired gentleman on the town council, wants to help with our dig. Take Gale and Walt [artist and craftsman]. There's no way to repay them. They spent three weekends looking for river cane . . . .

There's such good will and support from the community. It's good to give honorariums as a way of saying thanks, as a way of encouraging their support for next year. I've had calls from people in the community who've read your articles in the newspapers. Amos, for instance, offered tickets to a Cherokee lecture and nature walk.

André: How do you feel the project has benefited the students this year?

Den: The real benefit is being excited about learning. Learning how to find out things.

What do you feel? You've been to other schools, sat in other English classes. My question—the question I have to keep asking myself—is the question I want to ask you. The crafts are a lot of fun. But as far as writing goes, how do you feel about the project?

André: Well, since the writing that we do basically centers around the project, it's much easier to do than if you assigned a topic or a book report on something that we'd read. At the beginning of the year, when you told us about the project, we had a choice in what to do.

"We do too much for students in the name of 'help' and consequently hold them back"

Den: Did you find that to be helpful?

André: Oh yes. I got into archaeology because I'm fascinated with the history of the people, plus I joined play writing because I enjoyed writing.

Den: O.K., how's that going? The play writing? How do you feel about it?

André: I feel it's—I mean, it's no easy thing to do.

Den: Have there been frustrations?

André: Oh, there've been a lot of frustrations. Basically like, you hand it in, and you think, "This isn't going to work right." But it doesn't discourage you. It pushes you harder to write it better.

Compared to the other schools I've been in, I've never had an experience like this in any of my classes. I guess there are two benefits. One, Salem's a small school and the teachers can pay more attention to the students. Two, the project is opening my eyes. School's not that bad. It's something you come to and look forward to because it's exciting and educational and it's fun at the same time. And that's what I think is shocking the students so much. You're doing something, and you know it's an assignment. You're working with your hands, you're using your mind to write, interviewing people who are much, much more intelligent in the areas you want to work in. It's great in itself to meet people like that.

Den: Do you find that the crafts, working with your hands, helps you write?

André: I've never actually thought about that. What I've thought about is that going back to the natural way of doing things, like making a blow gun, gives you so much information to write about, more than you'd get by probably just reading about it in a book. I mean, I love to read, but you write from experience, you don't write from reading. In reading you get someone else's experience. Reading is good, but unless you get out there and jump into it and see it for yourself, you're really not writing from your own experience. You're writing from the experience of someone else (stops and laughs). I got going.

Den: That's a good point. I'm sure looking forward to having you at Bread Loaf this summer. You're going to work in the theatre, aren't you?

André: Yeah.

Den: Gosh. You're going to have a blast. Theatre people are the most interesting around. You have any fears about going to Bread Loaf?

André: I have a lot of fears about going to Bread Loaf. I fear I am going to goof up royally.

Den: How could you goof up? Unless you hit your thumb with a hammer.

André: I mean, working in the theatre, I just hope I don't get fired. And maybe the fear of being around these people who are very intelligent. But my mother told me that no matter how intelligent someone is, they can always learn something from you.

When my mother gave me Paul's letter and I opened it up, and it said, "You are invited to Bread Loaf. I'll send you the official letter in a couple of weeks," I literally bounced all over the room. I lost my voice, I was screaming so hard. It just shocked me. I probably never will have an experience like this again.

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UPDATE

Major grant projects

South Carolina Rural Writing Network

by Ike Coleman

At the start of a new year of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, a Bread Loaf Writing Grants Program project housed at Clemson University, we can say with assurance that the undertaking is a success. In it, students from five schools in widely diverse communities have become involved in their communities through local magazine and community-service writing projects, compiled a project-wide newsletter, learned how to use word-processors, made inservice presentations to teachers, published their writing beyond their classrooms, sent electronic mail to peers in Washington, D.C., staged an end-of-the-year project fair, and worked with each other in cross-age tutoring groups. During the time of the project, some of the students have even raised their test scores and their enthusiasm for writing.

That evidence of success doesn't mean we don't have to continue asking ourselves how to make the project better, how to more fully empower students and nurture learning in the project schools. We know we're doing good things; now we need to make available the expertise of project teachers and students to educators, in project schools and districts, and throughout the state.

To do so, in addition to the numerous student publications in project schools, we're paying a small stipend to teachers who publish articles. And through language-arts coordinators around the state, we've already scheduled inservice presentations by teachers and students for next year in a number of districts.

Most importantly, though, we recognize the need to make use of student expertise. Ginger Mullikin's students at Easley Junior High, for example, produced a beautiful magazine about the history of their county; not only is the work more alive than most commercially produced classroom materials, but it obviously is more suited to the needs of the area. We want to make such work available to other students, not only as an example of what they could do, but as a supplement to content textbooks.

Though we want to expand the projects, we've come to realize we have to be careful about how we do it. We can't grow if expansion means more work for teachers already involved in the project. We can always refine what we do in the light of our growing knowledge of theory and our familiarity with our own teaching situations and our students, but we can't continue to do *more*. Expansion, then, must mean bringing other teachers and students into the project.

Finally, perhaps the most exciting move for the future is our coming alliance with the Rockefeller-sponsored REACH project (Rural Education Alliance for Collaborative Humanities), a statewide partnership of students and teachers in secondary schools and colleges in South Carolina for exploration into the humanities. Such a collaboration will provide strength, not only through numbers, but through the intellectual stimulation of a larger project, one that has the potential to make an enormous difference to South Carolina's students.

Writing to Learn in the Elementary School

by Nancie Atwell

The fifteen teachers from Boothbay Elementary and Portland's Howard C. Reiche School who comprise Writing to Learn have one objective for 1988-89. We hope to finish the Writing to Learn book. Our contracted deadline with Heinemann Educational Books is December 1. For the past year we've been gathering data about four aspects of the work we started in 1986: learning logs and academic journals, researching and reporting, reading-writing connections, and teaching and learning. Our individual topics include dialogue journals in a fifth-grade math class, double-entry journals in grade three, techniques for beginning researchers, writing to learn in the special ed program, children's literature across the curriculum, informal and formal writing about reading, and how an emphasis on writing to learn changes teachers and the curriculum. We will also provide appendixes of resources for teachers, content-area literature, genres for report writing, and ideas for using academic journals.

The audience for the Writing to Learn book is two-fold. It consists of elementary-school teachers who are using writing workshop approaches and looking for ways to dismantle what Tom Newkirk calls "the writing ghetto" and apply process across the curriculum. We're also aiming for middle-school teachers of science, social studies, math, and reading, many of whom will welcome ways to invite meaningful writing about their subjects. We have learned a lot from Boothbay and Portland children, and hope we can do their stories justice so that others might learn from them, too.

We ended the school year on an encouraging note. In September and May we surveyed all the children involved in the project. Among the questions we asked were "Are you an author?" and "Are you a researcher?" In September 37% of our kids said they were authors. In May, that figure jumped to 82%. Thirty percent of the students considered themselves researchers at the start of the school year. At the end of May, 84% said, "Yes, I am a researcher." In May they could tell us how people become writers and researchers, why people write and research, and what good writers and researchers do. They know these things because they spent a school year using writing to ask questions, pursue answers, and share what they have learned.

BreadNet

by Bill Wright

BreadNet is a series of computer conferences open to teachers who attend—or attended—the Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury, College, Middlebury, Vermont.

For 1988-89, we will have connections to Israel, London and Peru. There will be a group of teachers of Native American students, at least two new interactive workshops for student writing, *Voices Across the Wires* (a student-edited magazine), several new schools from North Carolina and the Midwest, and a guest appearance from Dr. Margaret Riel, who has done much with telecomputing in education. This year we are encouraging teachers who want to manage classroom writing exchanges to set up collaborative writing projects: That is, have a *group* of students compose a piece to be sent to the distant audience. This allows the teacher to upload just four or five pieces of writing—not twenty-five—and avoids the headaches of trying to match students in twenty or more separate writing pairs.

The best idea of Spring 1988: Marie Salmon in Coats, North Carolina, at the end of a writing exchange with Bread Loafer Tracy Winn, sent a videotape of each of the students. But no talking heads here. Marie had each student introduce a different part of the school and the community: Wayne at the local drive-in, Sheryl at the principal's desk, Stan holding up a sample of the area's cash crop. This use of videotape technology was a terrific follow-up to the text-based telecomputing project. It let us be there and hear that, thank goodness, all of us don't talk like the guy who does the five o'clock news. ☐

Starring: *Oconee*
Tamassee-Salem High School, Salem, South Carolina

In lieu of a formal introduction to Oconee, a school and community magazine produced by Den Latham's students at Tamassee-Salem High School, the following comes from his teaching notes. All names have been changed. This year, Oconee writers are consulting other students as experts. Ann Young's English class at nearby Seneca High will help as guest editors on their new issue. David Ingmundson's Layout and Design class at Morse High School in Bath, Maine, will do the layout. Even before publication, the magazine is taking the kids' voices beyond the limits of rural Oconee County.

9/3 Another teacher wants my class to help his sixth graders interview Herb Barton, who ran 4th in the 800 meters in the London, 1948 Olympics. Interview turns into an Oconee article for Bobby Jones. Herb later wrote to Bobby that our students had given him the "best interview ever—better than the pro's."

Christmas: I'm reminded of the power of writing project Oconee on students' thinking. Robbie, silent, unmotivated, hands in work to pass, like several who never offer a comment or opinion in class. About his article, he said, "Tell me what to write on." I said I never choose topics for students, wanted to force him to think. Over Christmas, he called me at home. "I went on my interview last Thursday. My uncle drives a mobile CAT scan unit. He even invited us to go with him. We saw him give a CAT scan to a woman who had suffered a stroke, and we saw the veins on a big computer." Amazing. Schoolwork on two days of Christmas vacation from a boy who has never asked a question in class in two years.

I compare our searches and writings to the first time I assigned a research paper: "Discuss the relation of the Russian Revolution to Animal Farm." Everybody hateful and writing on the same topic. This year, Teddy is researching acid rain and ozone depletion with a Clemson professor. The morning transcripts were due, Teddy said, "I finished my transcript and I want you to read it. Thirty-three pages.".

Millie saw me in the hall before homeroom. "I finished. I worked all Saturday and Sunday and typed it."

After she left, a teacher next to me said, "I don't know how you get so much work out of them." I don't always. The only time I enjoy near perfect success is with Oconee. Out of eighty-four kids this year, only one isn't writing an article. The same morning, another fine teacher complained that out of fifty-three students, nine had handed in homework.

That got me thinking. I'm always amazed at how hard they work on their articles. I wish I could say that the writing project always had a generalizing effect on students' studies and grades. That's what everyone wants to hear. But it doesn't.…I have students who, because of low grades and high absenteeism, can't possibly pass the year, yet they still want to search, write, and publish. That attests to the power of experience in education. These kids aren't lazy, and they aren't motivated by grades or test scores. When they get to choose and make connections between learning and life, they work with the Energy of the First Time.

Clyde Alexander's Old Cars

by Javiel Rodriguez

Two old cars have been parked in a pasture for years. One is a 1951 Dodge; the other, a 1953 Ford. For Clyde Alexander, these cars have a past. The black Dodge was his favorite; he said it drove the best and was the most comfortable. The 1953 Ford was all right.

Both of these cars are now resting. Bunches of weeds grow around them. All the windows are knocked out, the bodies are rusted, and the seats are torn. Horses graze by them, and goats stand on their roofs. The Ford motor is a rusted chunk of metal, but all the chrome on the bumpers and body still shines. The doors open backwards. All the tires are flat, of course, and the rims are rusted. The boot is open on the Ford, and the goats sleep inside. The upholstery is ragged, but the chrome and gauges are good. The floors on both of these cars are about gone; you can see the weeds through them.

The best thing about these cars is that they both hold old feelings for Clyde Alexander. The Dodge was his favorite because he took his wife out in it all the time; but when he bought the Ford, he parked the Dodge, took the motor out, and sold it. The Ford he drove for about five years till it tore up. So he just parked it beside the Dodge out in the pasture.

Clyde and I met about fifteen years ago, at Moore and Moore's Fish Camp. My family and I had moved to Salem, so my dad could work at Lake Jocassee, running a bulldozer. We lived in a trailer house behind Clyde. That is also where I met Clyde's wife Mildred and his grandson Tim. He and I became best friends.…

Clyde was about six feet tall. He always wore loose pants and short-sleeve shirts. He was friendly with everyone he met, helped his neighbors, and never held a grudge. As long as I knew Clyde, he never worked for anybody else. He farmed, tended his animals, and I guess he loved doing it. When I interviewed Clyde, he started talking about the old Ford:

"I bought the Ford from Mr. J.C. Sloan up at Salem in 1961, I guess, and I had it ever since. I don't recall the boy's name that I bought the old Chevy. It's a '48 model, and I had it for about sixteen years. They both ran when I bought them, but I just quit keeping them up. Another car, a '35 Ford, I kept a while; I swapped a good fiddle to buy that car.…"

Mildred added that her favorite was an A-Model cream-colored coupe with a tan cloth top, a rumble seat, and red leather upholstery.

"That was a 1931 A-Model," recalled Clyde. "I forget about it. I kept it for several years and sold it, but I should of kept it; I should of kept it.…"

Clyde Alexander was a fine man. He was always kind to me and my family. I interviewed him on February 18, 1988, and three days after this interview, Clyde Alexander died.

Grady Alexander—Killed in Action

by Julie Dills

Throughout my childhood, I had heard of my Uncle Grady being killed in World War

II. From time to time, family members would mention his name, but he remained a mystery to me. Over the Christmas holidays, I told my grandmother of my plans to research Grady's past. When she cleaned out my late grandfather's chest, she found some newspaper clippings of Grady, and documents he had when he was in the Army.

Grady's picture was in one of the newspaper clippings. The first thing I noticed was his close resemblance to my grandfather. He had short dark hair, parted on the left. Below his high forehead, he wore wire-rimmed glasses over bright, unselfish eyes. He had a wide smile that showed the slight dimples in his cheeks. He looked happy-go-lucky, not like a man going off to war.

One of my best sources was Grady's wife, Edith Deason. She is an attractive woman with short blonde curly hair. She has traveled overseas and likes to visit her friends and family in Florida. Even though she has remarried twice and been widowed both times since his death, I am glad she is still part of the family. My grandmother speaks highly of her, and after interviewing Edith, I have the same respect.

She liked the idea of my writing about Grady. She talked lovingly of him; he was a kind man who had deep feelings for those around him. Several times during the interview, her eyes filled with tears. Even my grandmother's voice became shaky.

"I went to school with him, and I had known him since he was twelve or fourteen. We used to live as neighbors long years ago, and dated for a couple of years before we married on August 18, 1943, during the time he was in service."

When I asked if she liked the idea of Grady's being drafted, she said very sharply, "No!" with a warm chuckle and a twinkle in her eye. Then she said, "Grady didn't like the idea either." When I asked my grandmother the same question, she said, "Well, honey, it hurt. But nothing we could do about it."

I thought it was unusual that Grady had three other brothers, but only he was drafted. I asked my grandmother why. "They were drafted on later," she said. Grady was a couple of years older than his brothers, and they weren't drafted till the war was almost over.

Grady was working in a paper plant in Charleston when he received his notice from the Selective Service. He came back to register with the U.S. Army, and entered the service in April 1942. On August 15, 1942, Grady arrived at Fort Hood, Texas, to begin basic training. After the invasion of Normandy, he was transferred to England in 1944, as a radio operator in a tank destroyer battalion. After Grady went overseas, Edith didn't hear much from him. "The only place I know he went when he crossed the ocean was Cannes, France. I don't know where he landed in England, but I know that he was killed in France."

Grady didn't write much to Edith, either. "He usually used that airmail stationery and it would always be censored. They [the Army] didn't want anybody to know what was going on during the war or what they were going to do next. They were very secretive."

There is some speculation that Grady was in Operation Anvil under General Patton's command. Also, it is rumored in the family that some military fault caused many to die, including Grady.

Edith recalls being informed of her husband's death. "When I first got the news, the War Department sent some man about eight or nine o'clock one night, and he said that Grady had been seriously wounded. I didn't hear any more till August 18 by telegram—a year from the date we got married—that he had died the next day."

Wonderworks at Tamassee-Salem High

by Carl Duckett

Last year, Tamassee-Salem High School received a five-thousand-dollar grant from the Bread Loaf School of English in Vermont and Clemson University. This grant is renewable for two more years. With last year's grant, two freshman English classes wrote and produced a play entitled "The Legend of Jocassee" with the help of playwright Gary Cardin and director Steve Brewer. That writing project allowed the classes the chance to get more involved with the community and to research the forgotten Cherokee civilization.

This year, the students have chosen to publish a magazine about Oconee County. The students choose their own topics and interview various people; the interviews are then transcribed word for word, revised into articles, and published for the community. These students have a positive attitude toward research and writing.

A prime example is Steve Holcombe. "I hated English and always have, but I've had the best grades ever this year. I don't know if it's because of the project, but it's more interesting to get out, study something, take pictures, and write about your topic than it is to write out of a grammar book. If you're not interested in something, then you don't care about it. If you care about something, then you know what you're talking about; you know how you're going to write it down, and that makes it easier."

The project is helping students from college preparatory to remedial classes. As college-prep senior Rhonda Revis said, "It has helped my listening skills. I learned that when you talk to people, they don't always follow grammatical rules as you do when you're writing." Even though Rhonda is an extremely bright student, she has still improved her writing skills and her confidence around strangers. Working on her article has given her real-life experience that will be helpful in any career.

Not only the students support the project. Ike Coleman, the coordinator of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, gives a thumbs-up to the way English classes are progressing. Even the remedial students' writing has changed. As Ike said, "I've been looking at transcripts of the students' writing, and I really don't know who's in what class. One of the things I believe firmly is that when students are trapped into a remedial class, it makes them feel they can't learn. Everybody knows how to learn.

"I've seen differences in their writings. It's mostly subtle changes in how they express themselves. Interviewing takes self-confidence and communication skills."

Having been involved personally with the project both years, I've seen improvements in myself. For instance, I had the chance earlier this year to visit Clemson to speak with teachers and administrators of the Rockefeller Foundation. Due to my experiences in my freshman year, it was easier to talk with them. Working with a project such as this gives students the chance to learn things that will prepare them for the lives they will lead after they graduate.

Coley Creek and the Jocassee Watershed Coalition

by Joe Nichols

I like to hunt and fish. When Butch Clay, a Clemson English instructor, photographer, and white-water rafter, came to class, he mentioned Duke Power's proposed pump-back station at Coley Creek and said that it would harm wildlife. I thought I would look into it. I wanted to find out how the pump-back station would operate, whether it was needed, and how it might affect the environment. Through Butch, I got in touch with Jerry Beck, the co-chairman of the Jocassee Watershed Coalition (JWC). Like me, Jerry is "a lover of the outdoors." Though he lives in Easley, somewhat removed from the Coley Creek area, he is concerned. "I've used the Foothills Trail and the rivers up there. Also, I'm a Duke Power consumer who thinks that it doesn't need the project to begin with, and I certainly don't want to help pay for it."

The Jocassee Watershed Coalition is comprised of groups "that joined together to evaluate what Duke Power is doing to the Jocassee area." They also want to protect the wildlife and over a thousand acres of wilderness.

Duke Power selected Coley Creek out of an initial list of about a hundred sites throughout the Carolinas. "I think that twenty-three sites were in the Jocassee watershed area [the region drained by a river]. As creeks go, Coley Creek is fairly small. It will take several dams and dikes to flood the area. There is a high probability that if Duke doesn't change its management practices, it will continue to build pump storage facilities because they are attractive ways to satisfy peak demand.

Jerry believes that one threat to the wilderness is the access road being cut to Coley Creek. Another is Duke's removal of "an incredible amount of dirt down to the bedrock" to create pump-back reservoirs, in effect digging "a rock crater about three hundred acres big. This soil removal causes siltation problems. Duke is not doing a bad job of controlling it, but when you move that much dirt, there is no way you can completely control it." The dirt which slips by filters into the streams and causes them to look like "chocolate milk...."

First, Jerry gave me some background information about pump-back stations such as the Coley Creek Project, which will be similar to the Bad Creek facility now under construction. A pump-back station is "a massive thing to implement, but it's very simple in principle: Duke will open a reservoir floodgate. The water will rush down an eight-hundred-foot tunnel. With a vertical drop, it will speed up and have great energy when it reaches the powerhouse. The water will turn turbines to generate considerable power during periods of peak demand and then discharge into the Bearcamp and Horsepasture rivers which feed Lake Jocassee."

Because the reservoir is small, however, it cannot be operated for a long period. Duke will use this water to generate power only during times of peak demand. "In the middle of the night when demand is low, Duke will reverse the turbines and pump the water back" from Jocassee into the upper Coley Creek reservoir, a process which uses twenty-two percent more electricity than it produces.

Next, he used graphs to explain peak demand. "Most utilities have times of peak demand. Duke Power's peaks are higher than many others for two reasons: One, the South is hot in the summer and people use air conditioning; two, Duke has promoted electric heating in the winter. (In New England, for example, electricity is not often used. It's too expensive. Instead, they use oil.)"

Jerry showed me Duke's yearly cycle of energy peaks and valleys in demand. "Duke Power has a really high peak in January, which goes down as spring approaches and people heat less. Then as the summer warms, the demand climbs again and usually peaks in August, declining as fall approaches." To meet these periods of peak demand, Duke Power builds more generating stations.

There is also a daily cycle. "During the period of a few summer or winter weeks, you have one time in the day when you need peak power." Therefore, said Jerry, Duke Power builds generating capacity to meet peak demand a few hours of the day, a few weeks of the year. "It's very expensive. With the Coley Creek Project, we're talking almost four billion dollars—twice the budget for the whole state of South Carolina.

"Instead of building to meet these peaks," Jerry demonstrated, "why not reduce them?" Other utilities across the nation are beginning to do just this. It's called "load management. Duke has some load management programs, but they are basically targeted at filling in the valleys of the graph, not reducing the peak. Many other utilities are finding they can actually pay their customers. For example, if a customer puts a timer on his water heater, it may cost him fifty dollars. The utility pays for that because if it buys enough timers, it will reduce the peak enough to eliminate the expense of building another power plant. Four billion dollars will buy a lot of fifty-dollar timers." In another state, a utility buys its customers' old refrigerators to encourage them to buy new energy-efficient models. A third strategy for reducing peaks is to vary time-of-day rates to encourage consumers to change their energy use.

These other utilities are still making a profit over the long run, "because they're leveling out the peaks and valleys. They make their systems more efficient, and they don't spend all that money to meet peaks. It will take a sincere effort on the part of Duke Power to implement these programs because there's no incentive for it to reduce the peaks." The higher the peak, the more Duke Power invests, the higher the profits.

"If Duke continues to manage its system the way it currently does, it's possible we will need substantially more power in the future. However, Duke can avoid the need for the Coley Creek Project and still meet the demand for continued economic growth.

"Duke is in the process of applying to the Federal government for a permit to build the Coley Creek Project. The formal application will probably be made by the end of 1988." If the JWC fails, the Coley Creek Project will probably become a reality. Traditionally, the agencies which approve public utility projects "take the power company's forecasts as facts and don't have the resources to do independent research. They just say, 'Go ahead and build it, and then come back and we'll discuss what rate increase you'll get.'"

The Federal Regulatory Commission, which must approve Duke Power's application, does not allow the public to get involved until the application is filed and assigned a document number. "We're waiting until Duke actually files the application before we contact the FRC. There will be a comment period established when the public may send in letters, and an intervention period when the opposition may actually intervene in the licensing."

Jerry said that the JWC looks at both the economic and environmental sides. They tell consumers who are not nature lovers that this is going to hit them hard in the wallet. "The rate increase for Duke Power customers is going to be significant." Jerry estimates that the Bad Creek Project will raise power bills from fifteen to twenty percent; Coley Creek will raise bills even more. "Duke's total investment throughout their whole generating system is about eight billion dollars. If Coley Creek costs four billion, consumers are looking at something between a twenty-five and thirty-five percent rate increase."

Of course Jerry is also worried about the threat to wildlife, "especially the black bear, which is becoming quite rare in this area. The road construction, the power lines, and the reservoir itself will be right in the middle of the best bear habitat in South Carolina." Bears are shy creatures which require large areas to roam, "but when you cut that habitat in half with a road, you end up with two smaller areas less likely to support a bear population." Furthermore, "the road will be in the Thompson River watershed," and will cause more siltation. "At one time, the Thompson was one of the best trout rivers in the area." I asked if he thought the JWC had a chance of preventing the project. "I'm realistic. I wouldn't bet on our chances, but I think we do. It's a big thing to bite off. Even if we don't succeed, we'll educate the public and the utility regulators. They should really take a closer look."

The conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote, "Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question of whether a still higher standard of living is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free. For us of the minority, the opportunity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to see a pasqueflower is a right as inalienable as free speech." Consumers must decide if the Coley Creek Project and others like it are worth the loss of the natural environment.

More Than a Landmark

by Steve Holcombe

Having lived in the Picket Post area for some time, I have frequently passed by the old store that rests near the banks of a shallow winding stream in Cheohee Valley. The store is easily visible from the road and looks worse for wear with a decaying porch and wooden awning that sags noticeably at one corner. The building is still a deep red color, as no doubt it has been most of its life. A tall tin roof, rusted in spots, almost matches the store's painted walls. The front of the store boasts a tall headboard that reaches above the porch and has a round Texaco star in the center.

Built around the turn of the century, this old store was once the largest business in the area. Although Mr. Ed Kelly opened and first operated the store, Mr. Chatham ran it for most of its life. The store and the land surrounding it now belong to Mr. Hayne McCall. I visited Hayne at his home one evening and he was great help. Having grown up around the store, he knew quite a bit about it.

"Back in the early 1900's, this was pretty much the community gathering place. They had the store building, corn mill, and post office. Then an uncle of mine, Bob Sloan, built and operated a one-chair barber shop here." Hayne was full of memories about Mr. Chatham and how he operated the store.

"I've worked a lot for Mr. Chatham operating the corn mill," he recalled. "I'd haul the cobs from the mill out to wherever he wanted them. I've done some milking for him, also, when he had his own dairy cows.

"I guess one of the things I remember most about Mr. Chatham happened when I was about eight. At the end of one school year, I stopped by, and he wanted to know how many days I had missed. I told him not any, and he gave me a fifty-cent piece for that. He was a very pleasant, gentle old fella. I went to the store a lot as a child. I remember getting more candy than I could eat in a few hours for a penny."

This old store at one time was extremely successful. Most people only went to town two or three times a year, so they bought all their general supplies here. "As I recall, they had a lot of dried foods, beans, peas, salted pork, fatback, coffee, sugar, and general things that you would need around the house. Mr. Chatham would take in chickens and eggs in trade for groceries.

"People would also bring in corn to grind at the mill, and Mr. Chatham would take out his toll, a percentage of the corn, as payment for the grinding. He would usually grind and sell this corn meal in the store or use it as feed for the chickens. He would later sell the chickens to a Mr. Powell, who lived out near Ebenezer. He [Mr. Powell] would come by maybe once or twice a month and buy all the chickens Mr. Chatham had on hand."

Although the building itself still stands, nothing showing its former use is left inside. Hayne merely uses it for storage now, but the memory of its appearance still lingers in his mind. "They had benches and a few straight chairs on the porch. People would gather and sit around and talk. Inside were shelves from the floor to the ceiling around all four walls. In two or three glass showcases were kept clothing and sewing items, and in an old meat box he kept the salt-cured meat."

The store was also at times a place of recreation. Local people would participate in shooting matches or just listen to old timers tell stories. "I was too young to partake, but they'd set up a piece of paper thirty or so yards away with a cross on it, and whoever got closest to the cross won the prize. Mr. Chatham usually gave things from the store as prizes."

I often look back and think how hard it was maybe fifty years ago, but Hayne explained that people enjoyed their lifestyles more, and many things about living in that time period were better than today.... "Back then there was hardly any crime and people trusted each other more.... I can recall when it was unheard of for people to lock their doors. As far as the store is concerned, the only incident that I can recall was with Mrs. Ruth, Mr. Chatham's wife, who ran it after he passed away. Someone broke into the store during the night. Other than that, I don't remember any crime."

Several years after Mr. Chatham died, his wife Ruth closed the store due to health reasons. At that time Hayne's uncle, Ed Kelly, bought and operated the store until the mid-seventies when he, too, closed it for health reasons. "It just got to the point where he couldn't commute back and forth from his farm to the store, and it was hard to keep the store going with his farm and cattle operation."

After close to a century of work, the store now rests in quiet retirement, having served its community well. Yet the structure is more than a building, more than a landmark. It is a portal to the past, a scene frozen in an era long ago of a much simpler and perhaps better time.

Classes interested in getting copies of Oconee *should contact Den Latham, Tamassee-Salem High School, Box 96, Salem, SC 29676.*

WORK IN PROGRESS

A classroom with four tires

by Sandra Strange

In 1986 Gilbert High School, in Gilbert, South Carolina, became a part of Bread Loaf's Grant Project Four: The South Carolina Rural Writing Network, coordinated by Ike Coleman. Three interested Gilbert teachers decided to work with their students on a local history magazine, funded by grant money, and to share information with other project teachers and students via BreadNet and CUFAN, two telecommunications networks. What follows reflects only a small part of the project's effect on the six sites involved. Nancie Atwell comments on what she observes in Sandra Strange's classroom on wheels.

In this article we see the payoff when a teacher believes and acts as if her students are competent people. In unorthodox settings far beyond the four walls of her classroom, Sandra Strange creates an atmosphere with high standards for work and with a high degree of control and independence for her students, and they respond. Mrs. Strange gives us a glimpse at learning as a collaborative venture, with the teacher a genuine partner in collaboration as she learns both with and from her students. Through her descriptions of the changes that she sees in them as they find out about their community, we see a comparable evolution in her attitudes towards her students as learners and as individuals. Patience, sympathy, and good humor soon ride with them in Mrs. Strange's car.

At a time when the "de-skilling" of English teachers poses a real threat to our profession, Sandra Strange offers a much-needed alternative model of a teacher who takes the initiative, who knows what she is doing and why she is doing it. There is nothing teacher-proof about her method. In granting legitimacy to the social aspects of writing and reading, she invites her students to believe that school is good for something. Her students reveal themselves as people who have decided to enjoy learning because their teacher expects that they will.

Nancie Atwell

My interest in a folklore project had been stirred by my participation in the S.C. Midlands Writing Project of 1985. Then Marian Mohr had shown us a videotaped presentation of what her students were doing in their northern Virginia community. I returned to Gilbert that fall with a vision of what such a project might mean to our community and to our students.

I discovered that there was wide support from parents and other members of the community, fellow teachers, and administration for the idea. That year my students did family histories with success, but we lacked funding (and organizational skills on my part) to get their stories into print. While I knew that we had profited from the writing and interviewing even without the publication, I was concerned that these stories were not getting published beyond my classroom and the students' families. When Jo Mayer and Nancy Bickley agreed to spend our grant money to publish a folklore magazine, I was sure that what our students would produce would be valued by their community.

That has indeed been the case, far beyond my expectations. Our first edition of nearly one thousand copies sold out completely within a few months. The community received *Sparkleberry* warmly because it tells their stories as captured by their children. But the story that I am most interested in is one that will never make it to the pages of *Sparkleberry*—the story of what is happening in the lives of the young people who are producing the magazine each year. (Our second edition rolled off the presses this past spring.)

The setting for much of that story is my car. Usually, three students in the back seat and a loser who gets stuck in the front seat with me either because she or he moves too slowly or because she or he has more nerve than the others. What a wonderful classroom that car has become. For these ninth graders with whom I spend my days, the wheel commands much more attention and respect than a school desk.

On interview days, we head out of the school parking lot to a destination unknown to me. The students have set up the interview. The lesson begins with the teacher in the hands of the students, and the learning experience directly under their authority.

As we travel toward our destination, the students often point out meaningful features of the land: "Here's where I go rabbit hunting, Mrs. Strange. Did you know that so-and-so lives down that road?" Sometimes these comments turn into personal stories that I would never hear in the classroom, stories that give my students and me more common ground for learning about one another. Does that translate into tangible benefits in the classroom? That is a focus of my research this year.

I've shared a number of special moments with my students lately in the confines of my car. I remember the first interview for this year. Kelly had requested permission to join Craig and me as we traveled to interview Craig's grandmother. Craig resented having to share this story of his grandmother with her. He was adamant about doing all of the work himself. I had cautioned him earlier that transcribing an hour's worth of conversation is a big undertaking, but he assured me that he wouldn't have any trouble. (Sure enough! A few weeks later he proudly handed me the transcript he had meticulously completed long before any of the groups had finished.)

That afternoon we drove through miles of the quiet distances and open spaces that mean so much to many of my students. As we traveled, I reflected that the noisiness and closeness of the classroom brings out the worst in many of them because it is a stiff, unnatural setting far removed from what they consider important and meaningful in their lives. It also conjures up painful memories of past failures.

When we arrived at their home, Craig introduced me to his grandparents with a gallantry that I'd never seen in the classroom. And perhaps Craig sensed a new respect from me. After all, I was entering his domain. Craig's grandmother was cooking pear preserves from her wheelchair and was not quite at a stopping point. Craig asked if I would like to see the house. He took me from room to room—showing me the familiar things of his childhood with a new awareness—the piano, the old family pictures, each with its own story. I watched as Craig told me the story of each object, not so much in his simple words as in his body language. Yet it is his words that I want to help him find—so that he can communicate his experience to others.

A week later I was in the car again—this time with Kelly alone. On the way, Kelly shyly began to talk about her father and the serious operation he would undergo within two weeks. She communicated the depth of her love for him beautifully, and I found myself wishing that I had the tape recorder on so that she might transcribe her own words later on paper. When she later wrote about her experiences with her father's illness, her written words did not communicate nearly as effectively as she did orally that afternoon.

For the next two weeks, Kelly kept me posted daily on her father's feelings about his upcoming surgery. On the day that he entered the hospital I was thankful that I could understand her need to cry, to be hugged and touched each time I saw her. The experiences we had shared through her interview were of great value to both of us that day.

The car was again the setting as I took a group of five students from my "official" *Sparkleberry* class to interview Miss Estelle, who certainly qualifies for sainthood. After entertaining us for an hour or more with wonderful stories of her past, she wouldn't let us leave until she had given us lunch. The camaraderie around her kitchen table was something those five students may never forget. What I'll not forget is how Paul, who had transferred into the *Sparkleberry* class but did not particularly want to be there, responded throughout the interview. Unlike the others, who had their questions outlined before them, he had done no advance preparation and was simply listening to what Miss Estelle said. Therefore, his questions came out of what she was telling us—just what I want to happen as my young students gain more experience in interviewing. As we got into the car to return to school, Paul said over and over, "I enjoyed that so much. I'm glad I came. Wasn't she the nicest lady?" The other students were equally enthusiastic, but they had been so from the beginning. It was Paul's conversion that intrigued me.

Several days later, four young men set up a late-afternoon interview with Mr. M, a veteran of three wars and a weapons expert. Two of the students are very quiet, sensitive boys who had responded early in the year when they found out that my husband and son love to hunt. Another is an energetic young man who frequently antagonizes his classmates and me with his attempts at humor and his constant need for attention. The fourth is a skateboard enthusiast who had asked the day before if there were any way he could get out of the *Sparkleberry* class. He didn't want to do all the writing that was being required.

During the interview, I noticed how much more relaxed I'm becoming with experience. I am much more willing to listen to silences and to wait for students to find their own questions than I was when I first started the interview training. That gives me greater freedom to observe what is happening with my students than when I felt such responsibility to show them how to keep the conversation moving—not that I don't still intervene, probably much more than necessary.

While Mr. M talked about hunting and guns, I watched Aaron, who was sitting beside me. He leaned forward with undivided attention, frequently nodding. Surprisingly, although Mr. M is Ken's grandfather, Ken didn't play his usual clown role. He sat quietly, asking only a few appropriate questions. Equally surprising, David took the lead in the interviewing. David rarely speaks except to answer direct questions in class. Chuck, the skateboarder, was just as attentive as the others, and I believe we now have him hooked. The four boys understood much more of what Mr. M had to say than I did since I know little about weapons or hunting.

On our ride back to school, again in that wonderful classroom with four tires, Aaron voluntarily took the seat beside me. He wanted to explain why he had asked not a single question: "I didn't ask any questions, Mrs. Strange, because he kept answering what I was going to ask before I could ask it. You know, we just barely scratched the surface of what he could have told us. I bet we could have sat there for five more hours and he still wouldn't have run down."

Like David, Aaron has seldom said much in my classroom, but I've been peculiarly drawn to his shy, serious smile and manner. I asked some questions about the technical terms Mr. M had used, and the boys enjoyed explaining them to me. One of my questions elicited a response from Aaron that seemed to explain why he had had such rapport with Mr. M. His own father had died last year. At fourteen, Aaron now considers himself the man of the house, but he was hungry for the conversations about hunting that had probably been an important part of his relationship with his father.

What is important to me is that my students and I are learning together. And we are sharing more than head knowledge. There is gut-level communication, understanding that goes beyond the simple words we exchange, but that makes those words more important to each of us. I asked them to write about their interview experiences to compare their accounts with my own.

Aaron said, "I was scared at first, but after I got to know him a little bit, I found that it was fun. I liked to hear him tell stories about hunting and his time in the service. I also liked the way he told his stories. He told them with a lot of humor and made me laugh." Chuck commented, "I was still nervous when

Angie McQueen, Amber Fallaw, Ethan Shealy, and Kimberly Mishoe relax after a successful interview.

we got there, but when we were interviewing Mr. M, I wasn't nervous anymore. I was interested in what he had to tell us." David said that he enjoyed learning about what kinds of guns were used to shoot which animals.

Tina's comments reflect the anxiety that many of my ninth graders experienced: "I felt kind of nervous on our ride there. All kinds of thoughts ran through my head, such as, will they like me? Will I ask the right questions? Will I do good?" Suzanne said, "The drive back was noisy. Everyone was talking about what they had learned." Like many others, Christy was scared "'cause I didn't know them, but after the interview started, I became more comfortable."

Gina commented on the interview with Miss Estelle: "She made you feel like you had known her for a long time. I really learned a lot of things about Gilbert through her. It was fun making a friend in Gilbert." Abby, who had set up the interview, said, "I was nervous about what she would think of my friends, but I knew we would have fun because she always gives us stuff. She loves kids." Paul said, "I had a warm feeling when we went to Miss Estelle's house. She welcomed us nicely and fed us at the end. During the interview I noticed that she wasn't worried about saying anything, like about how old she was. I didn't realize how much fun an interview could be, but I found out. I'm looking forward to putting the story in the magazine and reading it when it's published."

Again and again, I have observed students discovering that older people are easy to talk to and have worthwhile things to say. Angie expressed this idea well as she described an interview with a ninety-eight-year-old former schoolteacher: "I met Mr. T, his son-in-law, and I knew that the interview was going to be fun and that someone other than Mrs. Strange was there to help us to understand him and him to understand us. We started the interview, and I felt that he was talking so that we could understand him. Finally, it seemed that all of us had relaxed a little, and he began talking openly to us. This put a pleasant air in the room. We all finally felt at ease with each other. After we left, I felt as if I had met a man who could help me understand why school is so important. He gave me a new way to think about how life is so much easier now than it was fifty years ago. Now I understand why school and old people are important."

Beyond the interaction with older people, students also learn from working with other members of their writing groups as they transcribe the interview tapes, put them on the computer, and then turn these transcriptions into interesting stories to be published in *Sparkleberry*. How glad I am for the coincidences that have given my students and me this opportunity. —

Three of Sandra Strange's ninth graders have written their own version of what working on an interview for Sparkleberry *was like this past year.*

"We had to work with...teachers"

by Amber Fallaw, Angie McQueen, and Kimberly Mishoe

We've enjoyed being in the *Sparkleberry* class. We enjoyed being together as friends and working together on a project for our school. We had fun on the interview and doing the other work even though it was hard.

Amber Fallaw set up the interview. She went to Mr. Ethan Shealy's house and asked his son-in-law for permission to interview the ninety-eight-year-old former schoolteacher. Mr. Raymond Taylor, his son-in-law, said he would have to be present because Mr. Shealy is very hard of hearing. The day before the interview Amber went back to make sure it was still all right for us to come the next morning at eight o'clock.

The interview took place on a Monday morning. It was fun. We were all nervous at first. Mrs. Strange, our teacher, made us feel more relaxed as we rode in her car to Mr. Shealy's. When we got to his house, Mr. Taylor greeted us at the door with a smile. He welcomed us into the home. Finally, we got everyone comfortable and started the interview.

Mr. Shealy seemed to be calmer than we were. He told us about teaching during the Depression years and many other things about the past that we didn't know. We all agreed we learned a lot by talking to him, and we were all impressed by his memory. We felt he was special in his own way.

After the interview, we got photographs of him as well as the school he attended. It felt as if we had known him all our lives. As we got into the car, we decided we had had fun.

Coming back from the interview, we decided who would take the tape first for transcribing. We took turns. It took so much time and effort that we tried to divide the work equally. We started putting the transcription on the computer for future use. It took hours of hard work, but we finally finished. What had been nineteen pages on notebook paper became eight on the computer. At the same time we were transcribing, we were also writing the story for *Sparkleberry*. Writing the story and putting both the transcript and it on the computer were pure drudgery. We worked a long time on an ending because we could not agree on one.

The whole time we worked on *Sparkleberry*, we had to work with other people, teachers included. At first we were scared half to death because we thought we couldn't do anything right. It got better because Mrs. Strange tried to guide us and make sure we did it right. She was behind us all the way. After the interview, we talked with Mrs. Strange about how much fun it was. At the same time, the group was becoming closer and more open minded. The three of us benefited from the project. Angie says: "I'm a natural writer. *Sparkleberry* helped to show me that people are interested in my writing. It opened up my eyes to the community surrounding me."

Kimberly says, "I got valuable experience out of *Sparkleberry*. I dance most of the time, and it helped me put more feeling into my dancing. I don't mind people watching me. I don't get nervous any more, so I can get the feel of the music and get into it, just let myself go. The project was worth all the time and effort we put into it."

Amber says, "*Sparkleberry* helps us with our writing and creativity. It also helps us to get to know the older people in our community. It was worth all the hours of hard work."

After a semester of *Sparkleberry*, Mrs. Strange asked us to give a presentation (along with the juniors and seniors) for a district-wide teachers' in-service meeting. We had to tell teachers from various schools in the district about our experiences with *Sparkleberry*. We told them about setting up the interview, transcribing the tape, and putting everything on computer.

We are all average teenagers—we like rock music and having fun—but we've made one difference in our lives. We're trying to become more active in school to make better things out of our lives. Rather than thinking of school as a bomb or a drag, we've decided to enjoy it. —

South Carolina Rural Writing Network joins REACH

by Ike Coleman

Two years ago the success of the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, a cooperative effort of Bread Loaf and the Clemson University English Department, helped to found a much larger project, the Rural Education Alliance for Collaborative Humanities, a state-wide partnership of secondary schools and colleges for humanities exploration. This coming year the South Carolina Rural Writing Network comes to an end as a separate entity, becoming part of the project for which it served as a pilot.

REACH provides a solution to the problem of continuing the work of a fragile project like the South Carolina Rural Writing Network. Through REACH, the theoretical basis of the Network will continue in the practice of approximately twenty-five schools across the face of South Carolina—theory based on the belief in the unlimited potential of students as active learners when engaged in meaningful inquiry.

REACH brings massive resources to education in the state: the direct and active support of the Governor's Office, for instance, as well as ten institutions of higher education. And REACH has an excellent chance to become permanent, having already received two large supplemental grants to pay for work in the next four years.

But Bread Loaf can contribute much to REACH as well. The school's expertise in the teaching of writing and language, from the masters who teach it every summer in Vermont and Oxford, can be found nowhere else. And finally, the South Carolina project brings teachers with the experience of three years' success as part of the Network. ❑

Ike Coleman has directed the South Carolina Rural Writing Network the past three years.

Beulah White, a teacher at Beck Middle School in Georgetown, S.C., presents a talk at the Spring NCTE meeting on her school's involvement in Project REACH.

Interdisciplinary Humanities Projects

A Model for REACH and the South Carolina Rural Writing Network

By Ike Coleman

Draft

Conducting a Humanities Project: One School's Story

Each year, students and teachers at Daniel High School undertake a different exploration for their humanities project--changing every fall for the sake of freshness and experimentation. One year, the entire school--students, faculty, administration and staff--read *The Great Gatsby* and focused their project on the book and the Twenties. Though the project was based largely in English classes, many other subject areas were involved, including physics, for instance, where students studied physicists of the time; or in social studies, where students interviewed elders in their communities--including their own grandparents--about the period and wrote up those interviews for presentation and publication.

As part of the project, students applied to receive mini-grants of up to fifty dollars to undertake their own explorations, culminating in dramatic presentations, musical numbers, short plays, videos, writing in a number of genres, as well as a display of Twenties memorabilia. But students learned a great deal aside from the preparations for their performances, beginning with simply applying for the grants; the applications, for example, forced them to decide how much their work would cost and write down everything they planned to do.

The project culminated in a day-long celebration for all students and teachers in the school, where both the work from classes and the individual mini-grants were presented throughout the school. Dramatic performances included titles like "An Interview with Eleanor Roosevelt"; "Al Capone and Bugsy Malone"; and "Zelda," a one-act play. Videotapes included "Writers from the Harlem Renaissance Come Alive"; and "A Newsblast from the Past." Collections like "Through the Eyes" and a Gatsby edition of the newspaper featured student writing.

At least partly because of the humanities projects that Daniel has undertaken, the school has been a finalist for an NEA A+ Excellence award. Articles about the school have appeared in *The American School Board Journal* and *The Executive Educator*. Superintendents, principals and teachers from all over the country have inquired about the project. Daniel has been named a Center of Excellence by the National Council of Teachers of English. And Nancy Swanson, lead teacher of the project was named Pickens County Teacher of the Year in 1989.

To help you and your school begin your own such project, this article will deal with practical matters like the following--and many more: What are the characteristics of a good project? How will the community become involved? And perhaps most importantly, what kinds of work can we--students and teachers--integrate into the project to insure that students are being enriched and learning the basic skills? This kind of project is *not* simply another form of enrichment for gifted students. All students need--no, require--such rich exploration.

But second, the major obstacle to a project like the one described above is probably curricular. How can a teacher justify the time in the curriculum a project will take? How can a teacher be convinced, and convince others, that the students are learning what they need? To quell such doubts, the second section of the article is theoretical, drawing from two of the most important lines of educational thought, based on the work of John Dewey and James Britton, and many others.

Please remember that this article leaves out infinitely more than it includes. For both practical and theoretical guidance, refer to the short annotated bibliography. Each of the books there will provide you guidance you'll find essential in the course of conducting a project.

REACH
and the
South Carolina Rural Writing Network

Since 1986, two privately funded educational projects in South Carolina have sought to promote learning of the basic skills while students are engaged in rich and rewarding explorations of humanities topics. The South Carolina Rural Writing Network, funded by the Bingham Trust for Charity and sponsored by the Bread Loaf School of English and the Clemson University Department of English served as a pilot for the much larger and ongoing REACH project, funded by a number of sources, including the Rockefeller Foundation, the BellSouth Foundation, Showa Denko Carbon, and the South Carolina Governor's Office.

Both the South Carolina Rural Writing Network and REACH have provided grants of several thousand dollars directly to teachers and students, who in turn design and implement their own projects. Because REACH continually seeks new funds, schools interested in joining are welcome to send letters of inquiry to: Jack Blodgett, REACH Office, English Department, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29634-1503.

But with or without funding from REACH, the projects described here are possible. Teachers and students can and do conduct rich projects with little or no money. But for those that require funding, money is available. In South Carolina, $2,000 EIA Competitive Teacher Grants are not difficult to get for teachers willing to do the work of applying. The South Carolina Humanities Council offers $1,000 and $5,000 grants. Or, to avoid the strings that come with grants, students and teachers can often raise money in their communities, from local businesses, the PTO, or a number of other sources. Jo Ann Wigington's students at Wren Middle School, for instance, supported by money they raised, published a magazine about the community for several years. Ms. Wigington says allowing the students to find their own funds gave the students much more investment in the final product than they would otherwise have had.

Doing It

Getting Started: Forming a Team

Assuming you've either found or don't need funding, perhaps the best way to begin is to form a team of teachers who will serve as the core of the project. Though certainly once the project is under way, other teachers will want to join, you'll need a core team to help make decisions, to contribute ideas and resources, and to provide support and camaraderie.

For the team, invite teachers who you know are dedicated, who care about students, and who are willing to try new strategies to nurture the learning of their students. Look for teachers in all humanities and social science subject areas. But a successful project must involve a great deal of reading and writing, in ways that are often new to teachers. In proposing a project and inviting teachers, give them examples of the kinds of work their students might be engaged in as part of the project.

A one-teacher project is possible, but not nearly as much fun as a team effort. One teacher trying a very innovative project is much more vulnerable to criticism for deviating from tradition, is much more likely to be overworked, and simply has less fun. In addition, if the project is successful, an individual teacher is more subject to professional jealousy from other teachers. Nevertheless, many single-teacher projects work fine. The successful network of Foxfire projects, for example, led by Eliot Wigginton, consists largely of one teacher per school. If for some reason, you can't get a team together, by all means start your own project, but make sure to find support from somewhere--particularly the administration, and other teachers in or out of your school. As I'll discuss later, telecomputing provides powerful access to professional support.

But whether or not you work alone or with a team, administrative support is crucial. In the Daniel project described above, Mary Seamon, the principal, not only encouraged the project but actively participated in it and contributed to it. Because of her support, the entire school participated. On the other hand, projects that do not have the active support of the principal are often dead in the water. The kinds of innovation required by a project involve the need for professional days, time off for meetings, special scheduling, as well as simply the kind of approval that will convince teachers that participation does not run against their interest. Without the principal and possibly the central office administration, you won't have any of these things.

In short, from the very beginning, consult the principal and seek her support. You'll have many means to convince her. Successful projects, like those at Daniel High School, have garnered awards and praise. In addition, any project should involve the world outside the school in a variety of ways that will strengthen the often thin ties between school and community. Finally, and most important, the students will be enriched in ways that traditional classroom structures simply don't allow. (For proof, you might write Jack Blodgett or Ike Coleman for copies of some of the many articles in newspapers and journals about REACH and the South Carolina Rural Writing Network.)

Choosing a Theme

The main purpose of a theme is to give a project focus and unity, while at the same time providing the scope for a broad range of interests and activities. Perhaps first consideration should be given to the resources of the place. Too often students don't find a connection between themselves and school. A theme, therefore, with roots in the community can help the students come to see the value of their home--and by extension themselves. But such a theme, rooted in the community, can also serve as a base from which to explore the world.

The roots in the community, though, do not have to be obvious. The Gatsby project is a good example; such a theme may seem to bear no connection between home and the world. It did, though. As part of the project, students interviewed community members and family who remembered the Twenties, providing both similarities as well as many contrasts to the time we've come to call the Roaring Twenties. Life in a tiny rural town in South Carolina, students come to see, was connected to but very different from life in, say, the Twenties in New York. Those connections and differences can provide plenty of material for all kinds of reflections in writing and talk, from historical analysis, to poems written from the point of view of someone on a farm in rural South Carolina.

Another such example would be a project focused on the Great Depression. Just about any subject area, from math to history, can benefit from such a study. In an English class, for instance, students could choose from a list of books about the time, from *Sounder* to *The Grapes of Wrath*, providing a rich basis for talk and writing of all kinds. But the project could be grounded in the community; speakers who remember the time could come into the school to talk about their experiences. Students could correspond with people living in nursing homes who remember the period.

Many truly valuable projects have been more completely based in study of the community. A publishing project, for instance, led by Den Latham at Tamassee-Salem High School recorded the stories of Oconee County, South Carolina. The magazine the students produced was so good that it received an unsolicited letter of praise from Studs Terkel. Though the material for the magazine came entirely from the community, the publication reached a wider audience; in other words, students moved from the community to the world, learning about both.

The Students Choose

The students should be part of the process of choosing a theme. Eliot Wigginton, in fact, insists that students must make the decision. If the theme is chosen without them, you've lost a chance to catch their enthusiasm from the beginning. And don't forget that students have a great deal to contribute; they may come up with a theme much better than one teachers might choose.

But the partnership with students should not end with the choosing of a theme. Perhaps through our roles as disciplinarians and evaluators we too often relate to students from a stance of authority. A project, conducted well, allows us to step down from that position of authority, making students partners with us in learning, and real contributors of knowledge. In the forced passivity of the traditional classroom, students have no idea from day to day what lesson the teacher will bring in, but do they know that whatever they say and think will have little effect on the course of the work undertaken. In a good project on the other hand, where students are allowed engagement, motivation is rarely a problem.

A Sample Project

Let's choose a theme and work out a theoretical project from it, much simplified. (Remember, however, that there's no right way to conduct a project--and different themes will require very different approaches.) One of the schools in REACH this year chose the theme mentioned above, on the Great Depression, a perfectly good theme to use as an example. What subject area teachers might you find to volunteer to participate in the project? English and social studies teachers are obvious candidates. A great deal of wonderful literature could satisfy just about any English curriculum, as could the writing generated from the theme. All social studies subjects would benefit from the exploration as well--history, sociology, even psychology. And what concepts in economics couldn't be learned through an examination of the Depression?

But don't overlook other subject areas as well. Math teachers, for example, might be willing to give problems a real world context by grounding them in the Depression. Science might easily lean toward a study of the Depression, concentrating, for instance, on scientists of the time, or in biology, for example, on agriculture of the period. Teachers in these areas may or may not be willing to focus their entire curriculum around the project, but even a small exposure to the exploration in a few classes outside of English and social studies would reinforce the ideas for students, and perhaps more importantly show them how interconnected all learning is.

Generating Activities

Remember that both students and teachers should decide on the project's activities, and that not all the decisions have to be made at the beginning of the year. Some of the best ideas arise out of the course of the project work--and can't be foreseen early in the year. A student, for example, might find a cache of family papers about the Depression, enough to occupy a whole class for a significant period of time.

Nevertheless, in deciding on activities, it's important to capitalize on the freshness and enthusiasm of the beginning of the year, for both teachers and students. Further, some definite structure is probably necessary for many constituents; "I don't know" is not an adequate answer to an administrator's question about what your students will be doing later in the year.

One more note: All the activities below are enriching and powerful, suitable for the most successful students. But they're also suitable for ALL students, including basic and resource kids. All the activities below have been tried with such students in the South Carolina Rural Writing Network and REACH. Students not used to success in school may need more time, but given enriching activities, the students will leap ahead in their ability to use language.

The Journal

Perhaps the foundation of the project for students and teachers should be a full, rich journal, or learning log. There are countless ways to write and teach with a journal, but there is also a number of constants. The journal must be a place for exploration and experimentation--without risk. In order to be so, it cannot be graded, except perhaps as a mark of whether or not students have written regularly in it.

The content of journals can and should become part of the fabric of the class. Students should be encouraged to ask questions they've noted in their journals, to read excerpts to the class, or to small groups--but if they want, they should also be allowed privacy.

A journal, kept over a year, can be a marvelously rich source of thinking, questioning, recording. As dozens of writers about education have noted, people like Einstein have depended on journals in their work. So can students.

As a source of thought, journals by no means need be well and carefully written. As James Britton, Nancy Martin, and a whole host of language theorists have said, humans learn best through what Britton and Martin call expressive language, which is the language closest to the speaker or writer. That language is not necessarily mechanically and syntactally clean. In fact, as we wrestle with the ideas that are most difficult for us to grasp, the surface features of language fall apart. Therefore, as we allow our students to use the expressive language in their journals, those journals will become more powerful tools for students' thinking and learning --and the journals will empower the entire project.

In a journal about the Great Depression, a student might record what he learns, relating it to what he already knows. In a project that explores the connection between the Depression on a local, national and global scale, that connection is perfect for exploration in journals. Further, a student studying the local history of the Depression will find that the accounts, even from reliable witnesses of the time, will differ enormously. Questions in the journal about how to resolve those differences--the kinds of questions that every historian must tackle, but that are left out of history texts--will make wonderful material for the class to wrestle with and try to resolve.

You and your students will think of many other ways to use the journals as tools of exploration and discovery. Remember only that students must have a great deal of control over their journals, and a great deal of freedom to take risks and explore. (Make sure also to see the books listed in the bibliography, like *Roots in the Sawdust* and *The Journal Book.*)

Into the Community

The community begs to be used as a resource. Most students unconsciously think of history as something that happened somewhere else; talking to people in the community about the Depression will convince them of history's reality and immediacy. Oral interviews, conducted outside the school if possible, or with guest speakers to the classroom if necessary, serve as a marvelous beginning to such a project--or perhaps a second stage. Students may need to read about and discuss the Depression before going out into the community. But the knowledge that they will venture outside the school will sharpen their interest in the reading and discussion beforehand.

Encourage the students to interview anyone they choose who remembers the time, definitely including older relatives. Through such interviews, students often come to know people they've lived with all their lives in a new light.

Interviewing takes skill, both in conducting and writing up the results. If you're unsure about how to proceed, you'll find plenty of good books available. See the bibliography for a couple of them. A few notes, however: Students should prepare well for their interviews--like the reading they've done on the Depression. But they should never stick to a list of questions they've written; interviews must be more dynamic, dependent on an interviewer who listens carefully to her subject and asks questions accordingly.

Devote plenty of time for writing up the interviews in class. Taking an interview transcript and turning it into something readable in print is difficult for even the ablest of students, but is also enormously beneficial. I can think of no other task that requires so many kinds of language use. In the entire process, from arranging the interview to publishing the results, students gain experience in formal and informal spoken language, transforming the spoken language into written, organizing, making decisions about dialect, and polishing writing. In other words, though the process consumes a great deal of time, students will learn enough to make the time well-spent.

In addition, of course, making connections with the community will have many beneficial side effects. A student may come to know her grandmother in ways she never has before. The people interviewed will feel gratified. The interviews or other community connections may bring forth valuable knowledge that otherwise might have been lost. The interviews should strengthen the relationship between the community and the school. Most importantly, perhaps, students should see more value in their community and their heritage.

Reading

Plenty of satisfying reading is essential to such a project, for many reasons. Reading is crucial in language development. Writing activities are fine and valuable, but they're much more potent when accompanied by reading. Further, though the connection to home is important, tying what students have learned about the community to the larger picture is also valuable, and to do that reading is necessary.

A bibliography of books about the Depression would probably fill a book itself. I mentioned earlier *Sounder* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, two enjoyable and enriching pieces of literature. Many teachers would want to make one or two such books required reading--whether the subject is history or English. But to make the class a rich source of information and experience from many books, a teacher might, with the help of the librarian, draw up a much longer list students might choose from. In this way, students who report in some way back to the class on the books they've read, whether orally or in writing, become true providers of information for the classroom. You might, for example, create a classroom volume on books about the Depression, using all the pieces students have written about the books they have read. The volume would certainly convince some students to read the books recommended by others, especially if students were given the chance occasionally to talk to the class about the books they've been reading.

Assignments like the class volume described above do a couple of important things: They weave together speaking, reading and writing, and they make the classroom a place where teaching and learning are intertwined--so that students have a chance to teach, and teachers learn. More and more, researchers and classroom teachers are realizing that these models, of speaking and reading connected with writing, and learning alternating with teaching, are essential to create the best environments for learning.

Other Writing Activities

In schools, we want students to learn to write in preparation for their lives out of school, but too often we give them little or no chance for the kinds of writing that happen in the world outside, with real audiences and real purposes. A project like this provides the perfect vehicle for unlimited kinds of writing that transcend exercises. Letters are a good example. Any true exploration needs contact with the world outside school, and letters provide that contact in ways no other medium can fill. Students, for example, who have a question about the Depression that neither the teacher nor anyone else in the school can answer could write to a library, or a professor of history specializing in the period.

Students can also write to set up interviews, or to find out the cost of publication for the writing they're doing. Given this context, where the letter is meant to accomplish something real, students' attitudes change drastically from the business letter assignment in the textbook. Students who actually want to learn something that a college professor may know will realize the form and the content of the letter will make a difference--a realization they may not know or care about if they're doing what James Britton calls a "dummy run" by writing a letter as a textbook exercise.

Students can also write more formal pieces for publication, to provide balance with the more informal writing of the journal. The interviews discussed above, for instance, could well be published for the school and the community. An elaborate publication would require more time and money, but lacking those, the community and school would value a simple xeroxed publication.

Teachers and students can publish many other kinds of writing. A social studies class could write a history of the Great Depression locally--a task they could be proud of not only because they would be published writers, but also because they would be real historians. State and local historical societies would be happy to help in the planning of such a publication, and would be a willing repository of the finished product. English classes might write imaginative pieces, like first person narratives or poems from the point of view of a fictitious person living in the community during the Depression.

Publication of any type is helpful for formal writing, giving students an audience, the pride of accomplishment, and the context where, again, they can see for themselves the importance of carefully crafted form, mechanics and content.

Dramatic Presentations

Another way to synthesize and present what students have learned is in drama or videotape. Students might, for instance, create a fictional character from the area during the Depression and write a play recreating that person's life. Or students might produce a variety of shorter videotapes, imaginative or more historically accurate. Videotapes and plays may seem less academically rigorous than, say, written forms of publication, but they can require plenty of reading, writing and speaking--and teachers must make sure they do, so the work won't be seen simply as a frill. In addition, schools appreciate project presentations like plays or festivals. Such presentations serve wonderfully as celebrations at the end of the year--or punctuations throughout the year.

Finding Help

Let's face it--a good project takes work, but any community can be a source of help in and out of the classroom. Many parents, for example, would love the chance to contribute to the education of their children. And including parents in a project may go a long way toward breaking down the fortress mentality many schools have towards schools, making the parents allies instead of attackers. They may be willing to do anything from chaperoning a field trip to helping to edit student writing for publication.

But whether you're looking for parents or other community resources, students can help make contact, and they'll learn in the process. A student, for instance, may never have made a telephone call for a formal request. The need for such skills is part of why projects are so rich as learning experiences.

Telecommunications

The South Carolina Rural Writing Network and REACH have enjoyed communication among schools by computer and modem, for teachers and students. Especially for isolated rural schools, but for any other schools as well, telecommunications provides an unparalleled means of contact with the world. A teacher whose students are studying the Great Depression, for example, might ask for advice and ideas from all others on the network. In addition, students could correspond with students in another section of the country, comparing the impact of the Depression in their respective communities. Or students at two different sites reading the same book--*The Grapes of Wrath*, for instance--could discuss the work. Or students reading different books could compare those books' views of the Depression.

Computer conferencing is unique in its ability to connect a number of people. No other medium can bring people together so cheaply and conveniently. Students and teachers conducting projects with a wide variety of themes might compare their methods and their findings by a computer conference. Or a theme common to all the projects might be proposed as the topic for discussion.

The possibilities for telecommunications, in fact, are infinite, but unlike the other strategies discussed here, telecommunications requires knowledge many teachers don't yet possess. In South Carolina, information and help are available to people wanting to be communicating by computer. Simply contact Kemble Oliver, REACH Director of Telecommunications, English Department, USC, Columbia 29208.

There's More

This sample is by no means intended to serve as a road map for your project. Whatever theme you choose will require different approaches. Your community and your students will offer unique resources that can enrich your project. Diversity, in fact, is one of the strengths of humanities projects, one of the characteristics that makes projects so much more inviting than a uniform curriculum.

A caution: Not one of the ideas above is new. You can find dozens and dozens of books that fill out this very simple sketch. Please see the annotated bibliography for a tiny fraction of the good books available on the kind of teaching advocated in this paper.

Fitting It into the Curriculum

Obstacles

Though the best--and most abundant--educational theory available backs an approach to learning compatible with that described above, there are many obstacles in schools to such projects. But by dealing with each of the obstacles I see, I'd like to show that a wonderful project is still possible within schools as they exist. First, though, let me emphasize that a project can and must include learning of the basic skills--reading, writing and speaking--if you ever hope to integrate it into the curriculum. The projects above, in fact, include learning of the basic skills in the best ways possible, but you can see that students will go far beyond the basics, learning about the richness of life.

Isolated Skills

Tradition as well as current testing and documentation practices in South Carolina encourage teaching of isolated language skills. Unfortunately humans don't learn language this way. People learn to read and write *only* by reading and writing, just as children learn to speak by speaking. A project like those described above, then, provides an excellent context for language learning. If you need a theoretical case to justify yourself, there is plenty available. James Britton's book, *Language and Learning,* and Nancy Martin's book's *Mostly about Writing* and The *Word for Teaching is Learning* are all excellent sources for language theory. But the truth is, almost all the current books about language theory will back you.

If you're departing from tradition, especially if your relationship with administrators is the least bit shaky, you must document student progress, at least as fully than the school and state require it. Folders of student work, from the beginning to the end are essential--and they're indisputable. You can also be sure that students who are engaged in reading and writing will progress a great deal--just as infants immersed in talk learn, almost without our help.

The analogy is intended: In many ways, people learn the written language the way they learn to speak. The most important lesson is that human beings are active and powerful learners, and in the right situation they learn quickly. If, however, we assume they cannot learn language unless they're taught it, piece by piece, they won't learn. That is the problem with many students who get to high school not knowing much about reading and writing; they have been taught *about* written language, but they haven't been able to use it much for purposes that make sense to them. And they haven't been able to experiment without risk. Their papers, in other words, when they've written, have been instruments of punishment, not vehicles for communication among people. In a project, with the opportunities for students to use language without risk --opportunities like the journal discussed above--students will make astonishing progress with the written word.

Content Coverage

For a curriculum that requires students to be able to do things, a project is perfect. Students can learn to do anything through a project. With such a curriculum, Eliot Wigginton suggests that teachers make a list of what students must know and be able to do. He believes students, with the guidance of the teacher, should design a project that will include all the items on the list.

But a curriculum that requires coverage of particular pieces of knowledge is another nut to crack. Anyone can design a project that includes business letters, for example, but teaching gerunds presents problems. I have a couple of answers to that dilemma. If something, like gerunds, is impossible to teach within the context of the kinds of language use found outside of school, then how important is it? Recently I helped an at-risk fourth grader with his homework. One of the questions he had to answer involved finding a consonant digraph. I had no idea what a consonant digraph was. I graduated from college with a degree in English, received a master's degree with an emphasis in writing, and I've been writing, talking, reading and thinking about language ever since. But I've never needed to know what a consonant digraph is. And yet a fourth grader, who already viewed himself as a failure in school, felt more of a failure because he wasn't sure of the answer. Are there such bits of information--or even whole areas of content within your curriculum--that, in your heart of hearts, you know aren't necessary?

As I've intimated before, for English teachers, an obvious place to cut is grammar instruction separate from writing. The research is in: Grammar teaching has no positive effect on writing, speaking or reading, and can actually be destructive.

A second answer to the curriculum problem is more general. At one time I'm sure it was possible to believe that there existed somewhere a body of information that an educated person from a given culture ought to know. In the information age, and in a society where cultural diversity is the norm, that illusion is simply not tenable. In other words, we're so inundated with information, and so surrounded by different views of the world that, as Dudley Flood, an educator in North Carolina said, "To know a millionth of what would be good to know is probably out of reach. Does it matter which millionth each of us sets out to learn?" Instead, it seems to me, students need to be constant learners--to know how to learn, to find resources for what they need to know, and to experience the joy of discovery. A project, well conducted, teaches students these things.

Success

Other obstacles certainly exist to innovative approaches to learning and teaching, some of them very real, some of them only in our minds, the remnants of teaching in difficult situations. But teachers and students in REACH and the South Carolina Rural Writing Network have conducted rich and successful projects; and their success has been reinforcing. Doubtful administrators, for instance, are won over by work that wins the accolades of the community or the attention of the media.

Best wishes to you in your project. Remember that uncountable resources exist to support you, most importantly the wealth of knowledge and creativity of your students. Make use of all these resources.

Brief Bibliography

Theory and Background

Britton, James. *Language and Learning.* This book is perhaps the most influential ever written about the connections between language and learning. Here Britton not only discusses the processes of language learning, processes that must underlie good teaching, but points to the primacy of language in all learning. The book, therefore, paved the way for many of the best movements in education, like writing across the curriculum. A wonderful, readable work that affirms the power and beauty of humans as learners. Middlesex, England, Penguin.

Dewey, John. *Experience and Education.* Here is the theoretical foundation of the project approach to education. In this short, easy to read (though a bit stiffly written) work, Dewey writes about children's need to be actively involved, to learn from hands on experience. Eliot Wigginton says the book is the theoretical basis of all the Foxfire work.

Martin, Nancy. *Mostly about Writing.* Nancy Martin has been a close colleague of James Britton's for years--so close that separating their ideas is difficult. In this collection of essays, she applies their theories to the world of schools. Also readable and enjoyable. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Integrating Reading and Writing

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle.* Almost step by step directions for a workshop approach to writing and reading. But the book does far more, providing a theoretical foundation for the kind of work she espouses. In addition, *In the Middle* is one of the most enjoyable books to read in English education. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Interviewing

Macrorie, Ken. *The I-Search Paper.* This presents an enormously popular and enjoyble alternative to the research paper--the narrative of a student's search into a topic of his or her choosing. Because such a search will usually include interviews as well as library research, a section of the book covers the process of interviewing. Another beautifully readable book. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Sitton, Thad, George Mehaffy and O. L. Davis. *Oral History.* This book is a useful how-to for beginning and sustaing oral history projects. Especially helpful is the chapter on project options, providing numerous suggestions for possible projects to undertake. Austin, University of Texas Press.

Conducting a Project

Bread Loaf News. Edited by Leslie Owens, this magazine tells the story of projects by Bread Loaf teachers or by other teachers with the philosophical foundation of the Bread Loaf School of English. It is, I think, the most exciting educational periodical in the country. In it, teachers and students describe innovative work they're doing in areas ranging from the environment to poetry publication. In addition, the magazine often features BreadNet, one of the most respected computer networks for students and teachers. To subscribe, send $9.00 to: Bread Loaf News, Dept A, Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753.

Moffet, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse.* Moffet sees the range of discourse as a spectrum from less to more abstract, and in this book he places all kinds of student talk and writing on that spectrum, with the assumption that students need to speak and write at all levels of abstraction. A teacher could easily use his spectrum as the foundation for a project. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1983

Wigginton, Eliot. *Sometimes a Shining Moment*. This is the story of the Foxfire miracle, from its beginnings as a small literary magazine to the present as an enormous educational and cultural foundation. In addition, the book provides some theory for teachers undertaking a project. The final section is devoted to a week-by-week description of a Foxfire course. New York, Doubleday.

Writing and Language Across the Disciplines, Writing to Learn, Journals and Grammar

Atwell, Nancie, editor. *Coming to Know*. This is a collection of essays by elementary teachers who participated in a writing-to-learn project with Nancie Atwell. Each of the teachers tells the story of her or his own work with writing to learn, including practical advice like assignments that work. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Fulwiler, Toby. *The Journal Book*. A rich and diverse collection of essays, beginning with articles exploring theories of journal writing, moving toward discussions of practice by classroom teachers who explore their students' work with journals. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Fulwiler, Toby. *Teaching with Writing: An Interdisciplinary Workshop Approach*. This is a book-length equivalent to a workshop on writing across the curriculum for faculty at the high school and college level. Highly recommended as one of the best books in the field. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Gere, Ann Ruggles, editor. *Roots in the Sawdust*. This is one of the classics on writing to learn, with pieces from teachers of a wide range of subjects, from German to art. Full of ideas and activities. Urbana, Illinois, NCTE.

Goswami, Dixie and Peter Stillman. *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change*. See the annotation below under Documentation, but this book can also provide models for teachers and students to study a project as it unfolds, enriching and deepening its value. A wonderful, readable book by brilliant scholars and dedicated teachers. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Macrorie, Ken. *The I-Search Paper*. See the annotation above, but this covers much more than interviewing. The I-search paper, an alternative to the traditional research paper, is one of the most appropriate and enjoyable--to read as well as to write--of all the kinds of writing a project could include. In addition, Macrorie provides a great deal of advice for tight writing and editing. Plus the book is more fun to read than a juicy mystery. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Mayher, John, Nancy Lester and Gordon Pradl. *Learning to Write, Writing to Learn*. As the title suggests, the authors believe--and mounds of research backs them--that we learn content and learn to write well while writing. This book draws on the theories of James Britton and Nancy Martin, and applies them to the setting of school. The book can also provide helpful arguments for content area teachers reluctant to try writing to learn in their project. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Owens, Leslie. *Writing to Think and Learn: Students and Teachers Together*. This is a collection of essays by teachers from Easley High School in South Carolina about their work with students in a writing-across-the-curriculum project. It's one of the best, most concise discussions I've seen of how to integrate writing into the content of the disciplines, thereby improving writing as well as understanding of content. The book is out of print, but can be duplicated. Send $5.00 to Leslie Owens, English Department, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29634-1503.

Weaver, Constance. *Grammar Practices: Perspectives and Definitions*. This is a concise description of grammar, both traditional and transformational, for teachers of English. But within the context of a description of grammar, the book repeatedly makes the point that grammar taught in isolation from writing can be destructive. Urbana, Illinois, National Council of Teachers of English.

Documentation

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle.* See annotation above, but in addition, this book provides wonderful models for documentation of student progress, including the real nuts and bolts, like forms for teacher and students. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Goswami, Dixie and Peter Stillman. *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change.* This is one of the best available works on classroom research conducted by teachers and students, providing several chapters of background and theory as well as a number of articlesby teachers who conducted their own classroom research projects. The book should be a wonderful help for teachers and students who want to document the learning that comes out of a project--as well as for those who want, not to document for others, but to learn for themselves about the world of the classroom. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Heinemann/Boynton Cook.

Wigginton, Eliot. *Sometimes a Shining Moment.* Though this book does a great deal more (see annotation above), it also supplies ideas about how to incorporate mandated basic skills into a student-centered project. New York, Doubleday.

RESEARCH IS POWER

by IKE COLEMAN

Two years ago a self-proclaimed educational expert, in introducing a Madeleine Hunter program my district had just adopted, announced to a faculty meeting, "We now know how learning occurs." I didn't say anything, nor did any of the other teachers. I'd like to believe I was thinking, "Who's we?" I would prefer to remember that, even though I said nothing, I wanted to tell him that learning, and the contexts for it, are infinitely complex; that we know much from the greats, like Dewey, Britton, Martin and Heath, but we can't know everything.

But I suspect I had only a vague, if strong, intuition that the man was blowing hot air. At the time I don't think I could have based an argument with him on good authority. And if he had countered anything I had to say with, "The research shows . . .," I would have had to lie down and die.

A few weeks ago, Nancy Martin visited the schools in the South Carolina Rural Writing Network, a project I'm now coordinating, sponsored by Clemson University and the Bread Loaf School of English, involving seven schools in the state. She was impressed with a great deal of what she saw in the classrooms of the project teachers: the mass of writing by students--and teachers--with real purposes and real audiences; the innovative use of technology, with students and teachers writing on word processors and sending the writing by electronic mail to other schools in South Carolina and the nation; the students, who, because they had been consulted about what they would learn and how, had become more engaged in their work than ever before in their school careers. But Nancy was shocked by the lack of channels in the schools for teachers to talk together about theory and research, about how people learn instead of the how-to's.

In these two anecdotes I see the symptoms of two serious problems with American education. One is that the entire public education system is so concerned with methods that we--at least teachers and institutions of teacher preparation (I was about to use the phrase "teacher training," as if there exists a set of steps teachers should follow to prepare them to enter the classroom)--are so concerned with what should be done in the classroom that we forget the most important issue--why. Even some of our most trusted spokespeople forget sometimes that methods are not necessarily transferable to the wildly diverse situations to be found in public schools; but the theory arising from good research can be transported anywhere.

But perhaps this obsession with how-to is only the symptom of a deeper problem: that somehow all levels of public education assume that teachers don't need to be entrusted with theory and research. That's a dangerous assumption, with far-reaching implications. If the people above teachers in the educational hierarchy are assumed to be the guardians of theory, then they're the ones who will hold the strings to classroom practice. We can't have it both ways; we can't remain in control of what we do in the classroom if we're not concerned about why we do it. In other words, until teachers join--and are allowed into--the discourse on theory and research, we'll be doomed, like the protagonist of "The Pit and the Pendulum," to an ever-decreasing space in which to do what we believe is best. The logical conclusion is frightening: the teacher's role would be simply to implement a series of steps dictated by those above, to teach a prescribed skill on a prescribed day in a prescribed manner. That's too Orwellian to be possible, you say? Look again. In some South Carolina districts the skill and the day are already dictated to teachers. Their method of instruction is also under siege.

(A note: I hear myself sounding the universal call for educational reform: "Something's wrong with education! Let's get the teachers to change, while otherwise the system remains intact." I don't want to give the impression that I think the onus ought to be on teachers. Certainly a large part of the problem is that teachers are in many ways fenced out of the discourse on research and theory. How much research, for instance, has been aimed at statisticians instead of teachers? But as usual I doubt that the people in the catbird seat--in this case professional researchers--are willingly going to move over to make room for teachers. So, for now at least, it's up to teachers and the rest of us who truly want to foster learning to make a place for ourselves.)

That's why teachers ought to be more concerned with theory and research; now for the how-to. This year several teachers and I formed a course in classroom research. By applying for credit to the South Carolina Department of Education, approved through the districts, all teachers were awarded three hours of credit towards recertification; the state's only real requirement, besides the application process, was that the course leader must have a master's degree. And I think the leader must be so in name only; in the learning community which was our class, we all contributed, and we all learned.

On the most basic level, the course served as a channel for reading and dialogue about learning and language, a necessary basis for our own research and invaluable to teachers in itself. We began our reading with James Britton's pioneering work, Language and Learning, rediscovering some of the principles of learning that educators too often forget, like the fact that people have an almost unquenchable desire to learn and a nearly unlimited ability to carry through on that desire--principles obvious to anyone who has watched a two-year old learning to talk but ignored by the empty-vessel model underlying much of the educational discourse and the structure of schools in this country now.

With Britton as our foundation, we moved on to books and articles about qualitative research: Dixie Goswami's Reclaiming the Classroom, Bissex's and Bullock's Seeing for Ourselves, and Nancy Martin's Mostly about Writing. In addition, each of us reported on books of our own choosing about research, writing, and learning. We talked constantly about what we read, relating it to our own experience and to what we were seeing in our classrooms as we began our research. As well as regular, written observations of our students and ourselves, we aimed towards a final project, either a case-study of a student, done if possible with the student as research partner, or an attempt to answer an honest question about the world of our classroom--not, as so often happens in formal research, a hypothesis we wanted to prove.

We recognized from the beginning that our research would be circumscribed by the very real constraints under which teachers operate, most importantly lack of time and the inability to be merely observers who don't participate. I can't imagine how public school teachers will escape the problem of never having enough time. I don't pretend that we found a solution, though I can say that within our limits we accomplished much in our research that will be of lasting value to our practice. And simply meeting regularly forced us to take the time for reflection so necessary but so lacking in teachers' lives.

Our varying constraints (those who were supervising student teachers, for example, had more time and the opportunity to be observers) dictated a wide spectrum of what constitutes research. At times when we were squeezed, data collection might mean no more than a note scribbled in a journal: "John said that he liked his piece on . . . better than anything else he's ever written. Tomorrow I'll ask him what he thinks is different about it." At other times, data collection was more formal--detailed observation, tape transcriptions, and analysis of writing samples.

But one of the most important realizations we reached was that learning and language are outside the realm of objective knowledge. In our observations, again and again we came up against the impossibility of knowing fully the infinity of variables--language, the contexts surrounding learning, and ourselves as observers. That sounds like a simple truth, and in fact it's a very old one. But its implications reach deep into educational research: if we can never know everything about language learning, can never know, for that matter, everything about the learning of even one student, then many of the truths about language learning can never be quantified. That shouldn't be a surprise; as teachers who appreciate the beauty of King Lear and who derive our deepest pleasure in teaching from the human connection with our students, we've known that the most powerful experiences of life are beyond numbers. As a result, instead of analysis protocols, we've begun to trust conscientious observation and the gift we call intuition, the faculty arising out of the experience of being human and the intimate knowledge of ourselves and our students which helps us filter what may be relevant from what probably isn't. One of our intuitions, in other words, could hold more truth--albeit of a different kind--than the best statistical research.

None of us started out as an accomplished researcher, and none of us will emerge from the class with earth-shaking new knowledge that will stun the academic community. What we did was become better, more sensitive teachers. I won't try in a short article to recount all the rewards of classroom research, all the benefits that make researchers better teachers, because doing so would require a long book and because other people have said it better than I could--particularly Glenda Bissex and Dixie Goswami. But in a state with as heavy a weight of educational hierarchy as South Carolina, one of the most obvious rewards of research for us was that, in subtle but powerful ways, becoming researchers overturned the hierarchy, freeing us and the most important beneficiaries, our students.

Let me explain. In an educational system where much of what we teach is dictated to us from above, we lose our sensitivity to the needs of students. If, for example, we must administer vocabulary quizzes whether or not we believe in them, we stop listening to the messages of students, direct and indirect, that those quizzes may be destructive to the students' relationship to language. Eventually, refusing to listen, to be sensitive to students' needs, becomes a mode of operation that permeates our teaching. As researchers, we begin to make room for listening to our students, for observing what nurtures learning and what blocks it.

Of course, all our problems did not dissolve into sweetness and light. If the curriculum had before demanded that we administer vocabulary quizzes, then we were not suddenly absolved from that chore when we realized that they were not helpful. In fact, becoming aware of the conflict between what we were supposed to do and what our experience, our reading, and our instincts told us was best was at times a source of pain. But at least we began to develop our awareness of the conflicts; and that awareness allowed us to decide whether or not we really had to test students on vocabulary, or if we had only believed we must. In other words, we worked within our limits to unite theory, research--our own and others'--and practice.

As researchers we freed ourselves from the hierarchy in another important way, as well: by conducting our own research. Also, by examining the limits of objectivity, or the impossibility of totally separating the observer and the observed, we became critical consumers of the research of others. The word research no longer scares us. In the future, if someone were to say to us, "The research says . . .," we'd say, "What research? Let's see how it was conducted." With the knowledge we've gained from the best authorities and our own experience in watching closely the world of the classroom, we not only teach more powerfully--we've become teachers with more power.

[Anyone interested in the details of setting up a research class at their school is welcome to contact Ike Coleman at (803) 656-5397 (days) or 868-4100 (evenings), or write Ike Coleman, 615 Strode Tower, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29630.]

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Carol Stumbo

PERSPECTIVES

The Eastern Kentucky Network: an interview with Carol Stumbo

by Susan Walker

Carol Stumbo grew up in Kentucky, attended Berea College, and completed her Master's degree at Morehead College. For thirteen years she has taught English at Wheelwright School in Wheelwright, Kentucky. In 1986, after attending one of Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire-process workshops at Berea College, she became a part of Foxfire's Eastern Kentucky Network, one of five rural regional networks Foxfire is developing to help empower teachers and students. Powered by Eliot Wigginton, the networks are being funded in part by a grant to Foxfire from Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity.

SW: *Bread Loaf has a lot of teachers working with kids in rural areas. It's good to hear a teacher who grew up in a rural area, and went off to be educated, talk about the effect that education had on the relationship with his or her family and community. Where are you from?*

CS: About ten miles from where I teach. I live at McDowell, and I teach at Wheelwright High School, which is about ten miles away.

SW: *How would you describe the community?*

CS: It used to be a mining town. It has been owned by one company after another. And the coal companies took care of all the needs of the people in the community. So if you needed something done, the coal company did it.

But after the last big company pulled out, a lot of people left. So Wheelwright right now is made up of mostly retired miners.

Now a lot of young people, as soon as they're educated, they're off, they're gone. We have quite a few students who are living with their grandparents. A lot of divorced people live in our area, but I would say, overall, that it's an older population.

SW: *An older population would no longer be very interested in education. They're thinking about other things.*

CS: Normally, they wouldn't be interested. That's true.

SW: *But it's different in Wheelwright?*

CS: Since the magazine project, it really is different. We have these gatherings for people in the community at least three times a year, and this is the first time that some of them have been in the school for a long, long time. And they're really very supportive of the magazine we publish—they believe it's just great.

SW: *You came back from graduate school thinking you were going to jump in and educate kids in your community. But it sounds as though you had a hard time initially getting back in, after having lost contact.*

CS: The kids at Wheelwright are really hard on the surface. I guess it's because people have promised them things and they have been told things that don't come true. So, if you come in and say "I'm doing all these things," you are going to have to prove you will deliver before they'll accept you.

SW: *Even though you were originally from that area?*

CS: Yes. It didn't make any difference. You just have to prove that you are tough enough to stay. And once you get past that they're the nicest kids in the world. But you have to get past that. The environment they live in, it's not the typical view of Appalachia—you know, where you have the strong family center. They don't have that at Wheelwright. Many of them have been just left with grandparents. Their parents have gone off…sometimes a father abandons the mother, or the parents are off looking for jobs.

I came back from graduate school thinking, you know, I was going to teach pretty much the same way I had been taught—which was a terrible mistake. Because I did not like the way I'd been taught. But I thought they needed that to face the outside world.

SW: *So when you came back you were teaching with the literature book and grammar text, and doing those drills—*

CS: —And doing writing. Even then I was doing writing. Because I knew when I went from Eastern Kentucky to Berea and they asked me to write an essay I looked up and said "I don't know what you're talking about." So I came back convinced that I had to teach writing—but I was doing it the wrong way.

SW: *How did you teach it?*

CS: Very critically, the way I'd been taught. Which is to go over everything and mark it until it looks like it's just been cut to pieces. And the kids hated that, and I can understand why. Because I had not liked it in college when it was done to my papers.

SW: *At some point, then, you realized that wasn't the way that you needed to be teaching writing.*

CS: I attended a writing institute in Kentucky, which was conducted by the University of Louisville's writing staff. They work with the Bay Area Writing Project. And Donald Graves came down and spoke to us. And that was a turning point. You felt good about what you'd written at that institute, and you wanted to share. And if I felt that way, surely other people would.

SW: *So that's all it took—Don Graves talking to you?*

CS: And that one-week experience. Yes. Because it just made sense. It just clicked. You knew that this was a better way.

SW: *At Bread Loaf they say the same things, but they give you fourteen different writing theory books to read to go along with it. How did you go about changing your teaching on your own?*

CS: Any method I decide to use in the classroom, I don't go back and try to do it in every single class I've got. I want to find out what the effects will be. In this case I tried starting with one freshman English class, just to see what they could do, and what I needed to learn, because a one-week workshop certainly isn't enough. I experimented with it, and watched the kids.

And they loved it. I mean these kids were begging to read what they had written. They were writing about things they wanted to write about, not what I told them to write about, and they were sharing, and they liked it. And the next year the kids helped me do an inservice, and they loved that too.

SW: *That's certainly getting them involved. What did they do?*

CS: They brought pieces of their writing, and then talked about them and the process that they went through—revising them, and responding to each other's work—and they tried to take the teachers through the actual process in one hour.

SW: *How did the teachers respond?*

CS: They liked the kids better than they liked the rest of it. That was the hit of the day. They talked about that for a long time afterwards.

SW: *It's unusual having students and teachers working together as colleagues—too often their roles make it hard to be honest with each other.*

CS: That's one of the things we do in our magazine class. We collaborate. The kids make, I'd say, fifty percent or more of the decisions, and they have taught me so much. They convinced me that I should buy a computer. I didn't want to. I wanted to get a typewriter to do the magazine, but they did all the research, they called the stores and found out about costs, and they kept saying, "Miss Stumbo, we need to do this." So we did it, and they showed me how to work it. They approach a problem differently and solve it differently, and I respect that. I don't try to say this is the way it has to be done. Each one works out an approach of his own.

SW: *You started your own process of evolution in the classroom. When was it you hooked up with Foxfire?*

CS: The same summer I went to the writing institute, I also went to the workshop at Berea that Eliot Wigginton was conducting. It was 1985. It was a great summer.

SW: *What kind of workshop?*

CS: It was for teachers in the Appalachian area—Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama—to get them familiar with the process of doing Foxfire-type projects. Wig doesn't want to push teachers into doing magazine projects. He thinks the process is the important thing. And I think if he'd had his druthers he would rather that we not have done our magazine.... But the writing was what I was really interested in.

SW: *Did you approach him about joining the Eastern Kentucky network of teachers?*

CS: The network didn't evolve immediately. It was after we'd already started our magazine that he became interested in centering on that area. I think he'd probably realized there was a great need in Eastern Kentucky. He told me, "If you're interested in this, we'd very much like for you to be part of it."

SW: *What's it like to be part of it? Has it made your teaching life any different?*

CS: It gives you a greater sense of responsibility to other teachers. You try to help when you think you can. And certainly I've learned from teachers in the network. You just have a common dialogue. You're able to communicate with each other. Some teachers don't have a great deal of respect for other teachers, and I think that's unfortunate, because the network allows you to talk to each other, discuss problems, to support, to find solutions you haven't even thought about to problems. It's very important for that reason.

SW: *How do you maintain your connections with teachers in the network?*

CS: Phone calls, letters, and meetings in the spring and fall. And there are plans in the network to have students and teachers visit within the schools.

SW: *Is there any thought of doing a computer linkup among network teachers, the way BreadNet does for its project teachers?*

CS: One of the things that Eliot mentioned when he came up here was, "I want you to check out BreadNet. Could we use something like this, or should we belong to this?"

SW: *What benefit has the Eastern Kentucky network had for the kids?*

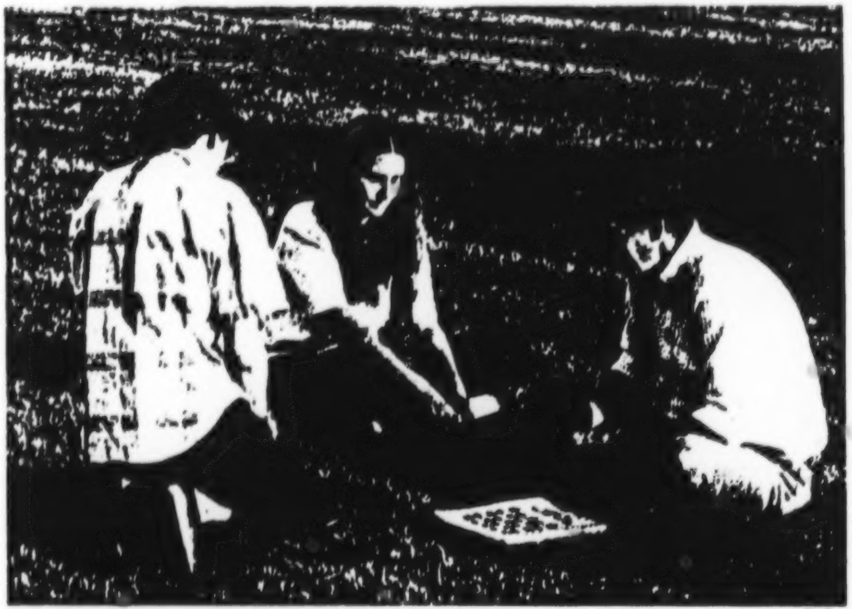
CS: There was a Berea workshop, with about thirty teachers, and about 200 people altogether. The students came, and did their own displays, and talked about their projects, and all these people from Kentucky were there to look at the student displays. My kids have gotten to travel around a great deal to talk about other projects. We went to Radford last winter, and we spoke at the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English meeting, and made a presentation there. And that's possible because of the network. It gives us more visibility.

SW: *That's a good point. It gives you an identity, an affiliation.*

CS: From using some of the network for inservice I now know that there are teachers with expertise in certain areas. So if I need to know how to do something on the seventh- and eighth-grade level then I can bring in somebody. And I'm working with the writing program in our county, so the connection is really valuable.

SW: *How did you feel as a teacher before you got involved in the network?*

CS: I felt very isolated. There are teachers in my school who care, who are great teachers, but—I guess the thing I felt more than anything was a lack of power. I saw things I wanted to do, that I thought as a



Susan Walker

Eliot Wigginton (right) meets informally with two members of the Foxfire Eastern Kentucky Network who attended Bread Loaf this summer, Carol Stumbo (left) and Susan Wood (center).

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teacher would make some difference if I were able to do them. And I wasn't able to. I didn't have a voice. But if you've got the network and Eliot Wigginton somewhere behind you, then people are more apt to listen to you and let you try some things that may be good.

SW: *What brought you to this group, to Bread Loaf?*
CS: Eliot Wigginton kept encouraging me to. I'd heard about Bread Loaf, and it was something I'd always dreamed about.

SW: *How did you feel about coming here?*
CS: Scared.

SW: *Coming from the South myself, I think that's part of the mystique of "competing in the Northeast."*
CS: What really scared me was when I saw the list of teachers. I had been going through writing catalogues, and I had been running across these names, who also taught at Bread Loaf. These are the people who'd been writing the books about writing. I was supposed to go there? No.

SW: *What did you find when you got here?*
CS: There's so much to learn and not enough time to learn it in. There's a concern here for sharing. I expected students taking classes to be very competitive and out for themselves—and that just isn't the case.

SW: *Are there things you're getting here that will help you when you go back?*
CS: If I just came here and read the books in this atmosphere it would help. Bread Loaf has made me want to know more about what's working in my classroom. It's exciting what's happening right now, but I want to find out more about why it's happening. And I also want to encourage the teachers in the writing program in my area to start keeping journals, to start keeping files the way Nancie Atwell does. We're doing good things, but we need to be able to show other people how to do them.

SW: *Do you think you might return next summer?*
CS: At this point I can't say. I would want to come back.... I do know I want teachers in our writing program to come.

SW: *I want to talk a bit about* Mantrip. *Did having your kids do that magazine on their area help keep them close to their own roots while they were being educated? That seems to be a concern you developed as a result of your own education.*

CS: Of course it is. Just because you live in a place doesn't mean you know it. I would ask these kids about mining terms and they didn't know what I was talking about. Some of them knew some things, of course, because they lived with grandparents who had done those things or were still doing them. But as far as understanding the place, I don't think so. Because we don't touch it in our classrooms.

The most common complaint we hear from our kids in their classes is "Why do I need to know this?" In civics they study theory of government and how things should be, and in these classrooms these kids are sitting there knowing that local politics does not work that way, that this is just not real, this is not the way it is. It just makes sense to me for them to find out: "Okay, this is the way it really operates now. Where do you go from there?" And I think they are learning—I know they are learning about the history and the culture.

One of the best things we do, I think, is getting local writers in. These kids in three years have seen more writers and talked to more writers than I have in twenty-some years. And they not only have to read the authors' books, they have to come up with the questions, and it makes a difference to talk to a real writer. It makes a connection for those kids that I don't think they'd get otherwise.

SW: *Do the writers come in connection with* Mantrip*?*
CS: Yes. And they're very generous. When we ask them, they say, "We'd be glad to help." We don't have to come up with any money. It's something they want to do. Denise Giardina said, "I just want these kids to know that writing is something that they can think about as one option, one alternative."

The content of that class is important, but equally important is the way it's taught. And the kids do not behave as they do in an ordinary classroom. They are responsible. They have to make decisions.

SW: *What kind of latitude do you give them?*
CS: About two years ago, we changed printers, and in the next printing of the magazine the quality was not as good. They'd even left the title off the cover. When it came in I was disappointed, and I said, "What can we do to straighten this out or can we somehow live with this?" And they said, "No way. We are not going to sell this magazine to people out in the community because they have come to expect a certain quality and we're not going to do it." So we ended up having to get rid of a thousand copies of that magazine and having it reprinted.

SW: *Is the magazine produced in an elective class?*
CS: Yes. It has to be. The concept of this magazine could be done in any normal English class, but we now have subscribers, people who send in two-year subscriptions, and we do two issues a year of about 68 pages. I couldn't handle two issues in a regular English class.

And the kids in the class range from grades nine through twelve. We have some kids who will end up going to college. We have some kids who will not. It's a mixture, which is good, because we use a lot of peer tutoring, kids teaching other kids how to do things. And as soon as they master something then they teach another kid and pass it on.

We have a steady stream of visitors in that classroom.

SW: *What do you do in the rest of your classes?*
CS: I do writing process, and except for that they're fairly traditional, because I still feel like I'm experimenting. Teaching this one class has changed my attitude. I'm certain it has affected my attitude toward the kids. I teach them in a different way, even though I'm using the traditional method. I just have a greater respect for kids, I think.

SW: *By starting those networks and getting that kind of enthusiasm going you can set a lot of things in motion, and if you do it right, it'll spread. Somebody like you coming up here, going back to the twenty-teacher workshop you've got going, and being a part of the Eastern Kentucky network—it's like an educational chain letter.*
CS: I don't like using the word "revolutionize" but that is exactly what is happening with the network. One of the teachers who went from Floyd County to the workshop this summer was burned out and had just come back in the classroom. And Eliot came and brought some of his kids to that school. The school is old, it's run down, it's a really depressing place. But he spent one afternoon there and talked about things they could do, and those kids—and the teacher—have just been so energized and so high all year. They would write him letters, and he would write back. He's accomplishing a great deal.

It really is good. To see teachers have enthusiasm again is really good. ❑

Giving their words back to them

by Carol Stumbo

This past summer at Bread Loaf, Eliot Wigginton and two teachers in the Foxfire Eastern Kentucky Network talked a bit about the Network and about what projects that use the Foxfire approach can offer students. Carol Stumbo was one of the teachers who spoke that night. This is what she said. To see what else she had to say, turn to the interview with her in "Perspectives" in this issue.

I teach in a mountain community made up mostly of coal miners. My father was a coal miner. And, as the first in our family to attend college, I want to describe the process that happened to me during my education. Because I think it's important. I think it has something to say to you. I can remember from the very first time that I went to school that things were different and that teachers seemed to know more, seemed to be better. Gradually, as my education went farther along, a separation occurred between what was happening to me at home and what was happening at school. What I was saying in my mind was, "What's back here at home is in some way inferior to what is here at school."

It has a lot to do with my writing too. I have always wanted to write. I love words, but what happened to me over the course of going to high school and then going out and beyond high school to the mountains was that I became more ashamed of my own heritage. You might be sitting there saying, "How is that possible?" But it's quite easy when you don't have as much as other kids, when you simply don't have material goods, you don't have the clothing, you don't have the *words* that other people have. And people correct those words. It does damage to you. In college I was taught to write. I can subordinate clauses. I can do all that. But by the time I got out of college I had nothing to say. Nothing that I *wanted* to say.

What Eliot Wigginton did for me that summer at Berea—and it was a really simple thing—was read a piece of writing that was about my place. And he said it was good. Now every single writing teacher I had had said, "Write about what you know." But you have to make people believe that what they know is good enough to write about. And by reading that one piece of writing, and saying that it was good, he did two things. Now I didn't know it at the time. It took me a year to figure out what had happened. But he validated the writing. He said, "Yes, you can write." And then he said, "Yes, the experience is worth writing about."

Now, in schools across this country you may not be doing what happened to me. That may not be happening to students. But I think in some ways it is. I think we don't let kids bring their experience into the classroom—and it's their world, and they know it, and there are things they want to write about.

Too often, we don't allow that to happen. And that's, I think, one of the most important lessons I have learned from this Foxfire experience. What good are the skills of writing if you don't want to say anything?

I do a magazine at Wheelwright called *Mantrip*. It is sort of like *Foxfire*, but I think what we're doing is different. A "mantrip" is a car that takes miners back into the mines. It is called that to distinguish it from the other cars that carry coal. The purpose of *Mantrip* when we began it was to explore what technology does to people's values. What happens when suddenly you have all these changes too fast for people to really have time to deal with them? We're collecting interviews out in the community. But let me tell you some of the things that my kids do that I find absolutely astonishing. How do you take seventy pages of an interview and reduce it down to seven for publication? The first time I tried to do that—I have an M.A. in English—it was difficult. What do you have to do in order to do that? You have to make some judgments. What's important? What information is absolutely essential to be included? What can we afford to leave out?

Another thing they do: We usually print an interview with an author and we do a special article on artists. Somebody has to read the author's books. Someone has to come up with questions. The kids do that. And they are using writing skills that would be demanding for most college graduates.

The magazine links the kids to the community. One of the things that we're going to have to deal with when I get back to school is a long article that a man in the community has written about this one figure in our community. Now, you have to understand that before this this man had been saying, "Young people are no good. They're disrespectful." He did not have a good relationship with the kids at all. We interviewed him several times for the magazine, and he decided at the end of this year that he wanted to give as a gift all this writing he had done. The man is not a college graduate. It was a struggle for him to write all this down. But he did it and he wanted to give it to the kids. Tell me that's not literacy or working as a community at emphasizing writing.

If that was the end of what had happened to me as a result of the Berea workshop I would be truly satisfied. It really isn't, though. Because we were successful with the magazine the county allowed us to try a writing program, and we're looking at research right now. At Wheelwright last year, we did almost a year-long project on the coal industry. Why have we been subject to boom and bust? What are the causes of absentee ownership? How do we take control? One of the things that amazed me about my education was that when I finished it and came back from Berea College and plopped myself down in Eastern Kentucky I thought, "Now, I'm going to make some *significant* changes. I mean, I'm an educated person, and these people around me are not. So I'm bound to make some changes." And then what I discovered was I didn't know what I needed to know to make any changes at all. The people who knew those things were people like my father, and my mother. *They* had that information. How does the political system in Eastern Kentucky work? How do you get something done? And I had cut myself off from my culture and when I came back to it, I might as well have been teaching out west somewhere.

The classroom, for me, is around my school. Those are the things I want my kids to know, and it makes sense. If you want them to come back and you want them to be able to make some kinds of changes, to improve things, don't you have to give them the information that they need in order to do that? Before I came to Bread Loaf I talked to a group of teachers who were spending the summer in Appalachia. They're part of a big overseas development network, and they're from schools like Johns Hopkins and Harvard, and I pretty much said to them what I've just said here. We talked a long time after that, and one of the things that they said to me was, "Hey, it's not only in Appalachia." These people live in communities they also know nothing about.

What's the education for? What is it *for*?

Eliot Wigginton gave the words back to me.

I have written things in the last two years, and at least a couple of them will be printed. It gives me great joy to know that someone would want to print something I have written. But more importantly, I think I can keep what happened to me from happening to the kids that I work with. ❑

Writing to Learn in the Elementary School

Writing to learn in the elementary school: One school's progress

by Nancie Atwell

With the support of Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity and Bread Loaf, we're carrying out in Maine a project called "Writing to Learn in the Elementary School." The twenty-one project teachers are all volunteers who have worked together since August 1986 developing ways to put writing to work in their grades 3–6 classrooms. They read books and articles about writing, write, and meet frequently with and without me to discuss what they're learning about writing from the children they teach.

In the language arts, teachers implemented writing workshops modeled on approaches developed by Donald Graves at the University of New Hampshire, Mary Ellen Giacobbe, the teacher–researcher whose classroom was the primary site for Graves's research, and Boothbay Writing Project, a group of teachers who conducted their own writing research in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. Project students write regularly and frequently, on topics of their own choosing. They draft, confer with peers and the teacher, and revise. When the content of the writing is set, student and teacher edit and the writing is published to be read by the communities within and beyond the school. The emphasis of the writing workshop is on learning to write.

Teachers then extended this knowledge of writing process across the curriculum and invited their students to use writing to learn. Drawing on the work of Giacobbe, Toby Fulwiler of the University of Vermont, Nancy Martin of the London Schools Council Project and Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire, they and their students put writing to work as a tool for concept development in reading, math, science, and social studies. This writing has taken two forms. In more formal, sustained projects, children used writing to conduct in-depth, content-area research. Teachers selected appropriate units of their science and social studies curricula; then, within those areas of study, children chose their own topics and gathered information through interviews, books and magazines, site visits and field trips, films and slides, guest speakers, and listening to their teachers read aloud. They drafted, conferred, gathered more data, revised, then edited and published their findings.

In addition to their formal research projects, children were asked to keep learning logs in one or more of their academic subjects throughout the school year. Here kids' writing was informal, tentative, and first-draft. Its primary audience was the student, who wrote to discover what he or she knew about a given subject and to reflect on what had been discovered. The log entries were brief, usually no more than ten minutes of focused free writing. Teachers posed questions and situations or set themes that prompted students to observe, speculate, recollect, brainstorm, role-play, summarize, predict, activate prior knowledge, shift to a new perspective – in short, to participate in their own learning.

"All I can say is that when you ask Nancie Atwell to run a project for you, you just stand back out of her way."* —Paul Cubeta

Nancie Atwell is director of Writing to Learn in the Elementary School. She was eighth-grade English teacher at the Boothbay Elementary School for twelve years and director of the Boothbay Writing Project. Nancie serves as a writing consultant to schools and universities throughout the U.S. and is a frequent speaker at educators' conferences. She is also an instructor at Northeastern University's Martha's Vineyard Writing Institute. Nancie is author of *In the Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents* (Boynton/Cook) and co-editor, with Thomas Newkirk, of *Understanding Writing: Ways of Observing, Learning and Teaching* (Heinemann). Her articles have appeared in many professional journals and as chapters in numerous books. Nancie Atwell served on the Executive Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English. In 1985, she was the first classroom teacher to be elected to the National Conference on Research in English. Nancie attended the Program in Writing at Bread Loaf School of English for three years and is now a Consultant to the Program.

"And ask for a report every other week." —Nancie Atwell

The schools involved in the project are in three diverse Maine communities: Boothbay Region Elementary, which is rural and coastal; Kingfield Elementary, located far inland at the foot of Mount Abram; and the Reiche Community School in the heart of Portland, Maine's largest city. During the school year I visited each school often and met with teachers on released time to share new information, discuss what was happening in their classrooms, and plan. Teachers kept logs too, and we began every meeting by writing to a specific question or issue. The data generated in response became the focus of our time together. In a February meeting at the Reiche School, I invited teachers to evaluate their teaching of writing by posing two questions I had often asked of eighth graders to help them evaluate pieces of their writing: what is working? and what needs more work? Teachers' answers provided a stunning picture of the transformations in the ways they taught writing as well as their kids' responses to the changed curriculum.

* * * * *

They have always had voices on the playground. Now, they're starting to get them in their writing."

Laura Farnsworth, Reiche Teacher

The Howard C. Reiche Community School is a twelve-year-old building constructed in an open-classroom style. Except for a few special areas, such as the art room and the administrative offices, there are no interior walls. Primary classes meet downstairs, and the teachers with whom I work are spread out across the second story, which accommodates ten teachers and classes. They carve out the territory of their individual "rooms" with portable bookcases, blackboards, bulletin boards, and cupboards. It is a noisy, busy atmosphere that does not lend itself to whole-group instruction. In general, teachers circulate among their students' desks and instruct one-to-one and in small groups. Reiche teachers, mostly women in their thirties and forties, have adapted their teaching styles to this environment.

Largely because of the physical environment, this is the most closely knit and collegial public school staff I know. They are constantly catching each others' eyes over the tops of their makeshift walls or leaning across a bookcase to crack a joke, ask a question, or tell about something a child has just done. Sometimes one eavesdropping teacher finishes a colleague's sentence. Teachers know what other teachers are doing and they share materials and expertise. Significantly, kids hear their teachers talking to each other, hear how these adults use talk to tease, debate, complain, raise questions, and solve problems. Most importantly, there is a lot of quiet talk about individual children.

> If this mix of kids could learn to write and write to learn, so could children in any school in Maine

The kids themselves represent as urban a mixture as exists in Maine. They are natives of many foreign countries—Poland, Afghanistan, Laos, Japan, Cambodia, and Viet Nam—as well as the children of dyed-in-the-wool Mainers. Almost all the students live in the immediate vicinity of Reiche and walk to school each day. The area is economically depressed and over 60% of the children qualify for free lunch; however, their parents represent an incredible range, from A.F.D.C. mothers to brain surgeons and engineers. This heterogeneity was one of the reasons I invited Reiche's participation in the project. If this mix of kids could learn to write and write to learn, so could children in any school in Maine.

In writing, everyone's equal

By February, Reiche teachers' lists of what was working in their teaching of writing were four and five times the length of areas still needing work. Near the top of almost every list was some mention of improved peer relations. Their groups of diverse students were working together, in lovely and unexpected ways.

Anne Clemons remarked on the collaborative projects kids were initiating, like the book about stars and planets that Aaron and Alex were writing and illustrating, and Andrea Boody noted that "the non-judgmental atmosphere of writing time has begun to carry over into the rest of the school day." She heard her kids asking each other about their plans and intentions, listening to each other, and offering their help, rather than praising their friends and ignoring their other classmates. As Mark Christensen said, "It's the one time of day when everyone is equal. In reading we have groups, but there are no groups in writing. All students can write."

Nancie Atwell and a student discuss a log entry.

Creating time for writing

Kids love the writing time. Andrea's third graders clap when she passes out their writing folders. Mark's fifth graders "groan and complain if something happens to write it off the schedule." Teachers had to work hard to establish predictable schedules and routines so their students knew when they would be writing and knew what would happen during the workshop. As Mark observed, it was less a matter of creating a time for writing as one of insisting upon it. This group of teachers had extraordinary demands made on its time, both in class and out, by its administration. In addition to the writing project, for which they volunteered, they were mandated this year to introduce new math, health, and fire safety programs.

Given this context, project teachers' determination to maintain a regular time for writing is a tribute to their commitments to their students—as well as an indicator of their understanding of writing process. They know students need frequent, sustained, and predictable time set aside to write if they are to grow as writers. Mark Christensen characterized the workshop routine as a "unique combination of structure and freedom working together." Janine Pierpont, another fifth grade teacher, noted that by Christmas the workshop routine was so well established (mini-lesson, a quick status-of-the-class check, a chunk of time for writing and conferring, then a group meeting at the end) that she and her kids could concentrate solely on the writing. Janine's students took on much of the responsibility of running their workshop. For example, each week one fifth grader, as class secretary, was in charge of filling in classmates' names on the status-of-the-class chart and filing and retrieving students' stories.

Finding topics, increasing range

Four of the teachers commented on how the predictableness of the workshop was affecting kids' writing. Andrea said she no longer had to prompt topics. Accustomed to developing their own ideas, her third graders easily came up with subjects of their own. Janine saw her writers benefiting especially from their regular group meetings, where their "good ideas are constantly rubbing off on each other." Lolita Bishop and Anne Clemons both noticed the increased length and detail of her third graders' pieces, as kids learned how to take advantage of the daily time their teachers had set aside to pursue ideas in depth.

"Writing to Learn in the Elementary School" is Project II sponsored by Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity's grant to the Bread Loaf School of English Program in Writing. It is a three-year project designed to introduce a variety of approaches to learning through writing, approaches that attempt to address problems pinpointed in a number of recent reports on education:

- Most of the writing elementary school students do is copying.
- Students spend 70–90% of their time in school listening to teachers lecture or give instruction.
- The majority of student work takes the form of drills, work-sheet exercises, and short-answer questions.

Lo Bishop also observed her students' increased knowledge and application of skills. She said, "This year they learned how to use a dictionary. They're a hundred percent better at using references than my last year's class, and last year I did a long dictionary unit." Andrea and Janine both discussed the effects of their skills mini-lessons, as seen in students' use of quotation marks, showing rather than telling, and lead writing.

By February, the really exciting development at Reiche was the range of genres beginning to show up in children's writing. Nancy Chard said, "There are all these different kinds of writing all of the time—stories, comic strips, poems, letters—and I don't even have to encourage it." Andrea and Anne's third graders were writing their own chapter books—*Cha-Cha's Adventure*, the chronicles of a sweet little monkey, *The Blood in the Book*, a full-blown mystery, and *Ratty the Mouse*, a nine-chapter saga. Students' revisions went well beyond minor tinkering to embrace the adoption of new, more appropriate modes. Third grader Kelly's *Adventures in the Jungle* began as a narrative. After her class read a play, Anne Clemons heard Kelly recruiting classmates, "Will you be the lion? Will you be a giraffe?" *Adventures in the Jungle* became a play that Anne's kids acted out.

Writing to be read

Clearly, their reading had a significant impact on Reiche students' writing; however, it was mostly teachers' supplemental activities that made the impact. The mandated reading program is deadly and voiceless. As Mark said, "The stories in the Ginn series are boring and don't lead to good writing. But I can see the effects on their writing of reading poetry aloud, or a book like *Where the Red Fern Grows.*" I could also see the effects of publication, of opportunities to read other students' writing. Reiche teachers committed a healthy chunk of their project funds to a school literary magazine, *Kids Are Authors, Too!* which appeared three times during the 1986–87 school year.

Laura Farnsworth's students were similarly inspired by the introduction of bound books, which teachers produced using a simple technique borrowed from Mary Ellen Giacobbe. Laura said, "When the first kid produced a hard-cover book, everyone wanted to get to that stage. Six of my really timid kids are now ready to publish because they want to be authors of books too." Every class offered a prominent library of sturdy, good-looking books written by the children. And just as students had taken the initiative on issues of genre, they created new publishing techniques to meet their own requirements for particular pieces of writing. For example, Lo Bishop's third graders published posters with an ingenious series of windows and doors that opened to reveal writing and tacked them to Lo's bulletin boards. The second floor of Reiche at any given time offers a dozen or so constantly changing bulletin board displays of kids' writing—and their teachers' writing too. The principal was stopped in her tracks in December by a stunning Christmas poem among the array on one of Andrea Boody's boards. She gasped, "Andrea, you have a genius in your room!" The genius was Miss Boody.

Learning, evaluating, logging

The principal was naturally concerned about evaluation, about how students would perform on the state assessment in language arts. Writing teachers in Maine are lucky. Our new testing program calls for annual assessments at grades four, eight, and eleven; in the language arts, the test consists of two writing samples. The topics are assigned but students are given all the time they need for each—all day, if they desire—and are encouraged to draft, revise, edit, and use dictionaries. This past year, Reiche's fourth graders responded very differently to the test situation. Jo Lee said, "I couldn't believe it. They just wrote and wrote—pages of writing. Last year I'd say my kids wrote, on average, about a paragraph. But maybe the best comparison is with what these same kids wrote at the beginning of the school year. At the end of the testing I asked them, "Would anyone have written this much in September?" The whole class answered, 'Nooooo way.' I'll be anxious to see how they score."

At a more local level, teachers and kids evaluated progress in writing in individual conferences. At the end of each quarter Nancy Chard met with each of her fourth graders to assess what the writer had accomplished and to set a few goals for the next nine weeks. She said, "The kids were actually excited about goal-setting because this was something they could do. When I asked, 'What do you think you need to work on?' they set many of the same goals I'd had in my mind. There weren't many surprises. It was a satisfying way of evaluating, and it was so concrete."

Nancy also used her students' science and social studies logs to help her evaluate both their learning and her teaching. She said, "The log writing really helps me. If I've asked them to write what they've discovered about a certain topic and what turns up is way off base, it helps me to improve my teaching. I have to go back and re-think the ways I'm presenting information." Lo Bishop agreed. "I've gotten so I really rely on the kids' judgments. This isn't something I've done before. The logs generate information for students and for the teacher, but it's not a test of what they know. It's a chance to find out and share what they know. And that's very different."

Researching: kids as experts

By February, two classes, Andrea's and Charlene's, had begun their major research projects. Andrea's third graders had started their study of astronomy, and had taken off. She wrote, "I cannot get them to stop. It seems as if all day long they're either talking about the solar system or researching it." They were viewing overheads and filmstrips in the media center, looking at models and charts, reading Greek mythology, keeping moon journals, and visiting Southworth Planetarium. Charlene Laughlin's third graders studied dental hygiene as part of the school health program. She saw two major benefits to her kids' research: "First, the kids have a sense of themselves as experts. They can help peers by telling what they've found out or by directing them to appropriate materials. And they have discovered that information doesn't just reside in books. Their interviewing is still rocky, but they're learning what you can find out through thoughtful questioning and listening. As one little girl said, 'Gee, my mother knows a lot!'"

Solving problems, defining roles

In shifting to a discussion of what needed more work at Reiche, teachers talked about editing and conferring, problems with particular students, and the difficulty of finding and maintaining the delicate balance between student and teacher initiative.

Editing problems mostly involved students taking responsibility for errors in spelling and end-stop punctuation. I showed teachers techniques they could teach their kids in conferences and mini-lessons: how to circle every word that doesn't look right or of which the writer isn't absolutely certain and then go back and look up spellings; how a couple of good spellers can become class experts who will give a poor speller just the first two or three letters in a word so the writer can find the word in a dictionary; how students who don't understand what periods do can be taught to proofread their writing by reading it aloud, listening for the places where their voices drop and stop; how teachers need to establish editorial priorities and emphasize just one skill at a time; and so on.

The problem we could not so easily solve was the question of teacher expectation. When was it better to be patient and wait? To challenge and push? Such questions are inevitable among teachers making the shift from programmed to student-centered approaches. Initially we need to stand back in order to observe our students learning, to say, "If I give my kids time and freedom of choice, what will they do?" Then, as we learn about what is possible, we begin to know what to expect and when to direct.

For example, Reiche teachers had pretty much allowed children to take the lead in how they used their writing time, as long as kids were occupied in writing-related activity, but they did not ask individual writers to account for what they accomplished from week to week. On average, students finished two or three pieces of writing each quarter. During the Maine language arts assessment, when they observed kids using writing time so purposefully and productively, teachers knew they needed to raise their expectations for what happened during the writers' workshop and to help individual children who needed a nudge set deadlines.

These are the sorts of issues we can mull over and write about in our logs. We can meet to share our experiences and our tentative solutions, and we can read about and discuss other teachers' solutions. But in the end these are the questions teachers answer individually and over time, based on our understandings of the writing process and our understandings of the individual writers in our classrooms. The Bingham/Bread Loaf grant is helping Reiche teachers begin to acquire this knowledge—and at the same time to recognize new, complicated issues. From my perspective as project director, what is working at Reiche School is the ongoing struggle to define roles and responsibilities. Implicit in the struggle is the power and satisfaction derived when teachers and their kids, rather than publishers and administrators, determine how a subject might best be taught and learned.